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100 Games Rated!

Number 91

February 1992

Conan the Cimmerian ● Perfect General Tips ● Riders of Rohan

COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

The Premier Computer Game Magazine

Sir-Tech's *Wizardry VII: Crusaders of the Dark Savant*



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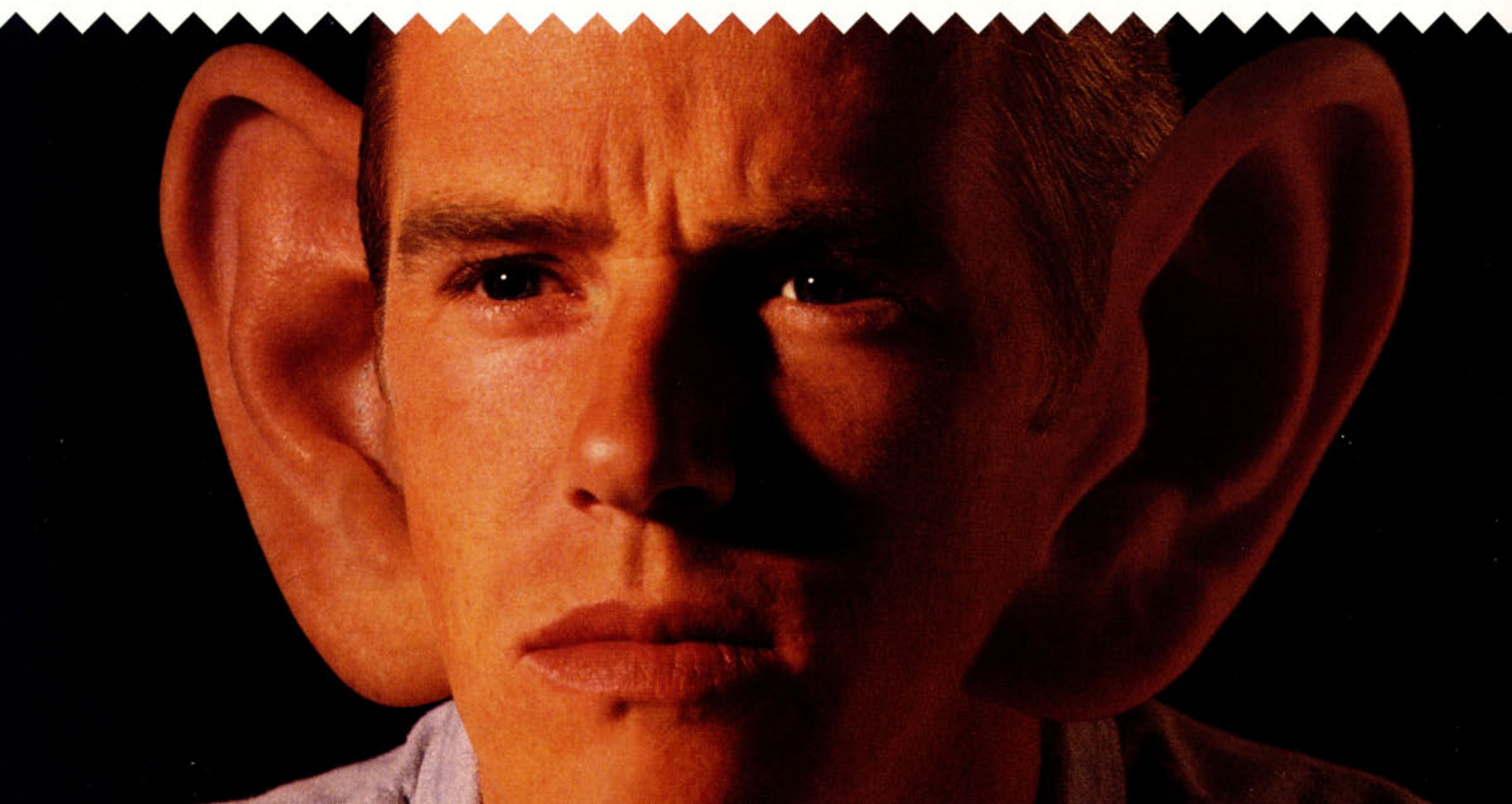
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Circle Reader Service #36





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OVER ONE THOUSAND YEARS IN THE FUTURE, TRAPPED IN A NEW WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN. A FEW SUBHUMANS, ROBOTS, MUTANT SLIME CREATURES, A MAD SCIENTIST, A BLONDE WOMAN NAMED JOHNNIE AND YOU ARE THE STARS IN AN EPIC CINEMATIC ADVENTURE SET IN THE ANCIENT RUINS OF WASHINGTON, D.C.
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February 1992 Number 91

Covering the World of Computer Games for Eleven Years

COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

Features





"...Obitus is, simply put, the best game I have ever seen".
Info magazine.

Circle Reader Service #73

BEHOLD THE VIRTUAL WORLD OF OBITUS!

Obitus brings adventure role-playing to your computer like you've never seen it before!

Waking up lost and alone, you are trapped in the medieval world of Middlemere until you solve the ancient mystery of the Tower. It will be a perilous quest. Breathtaking graphics scroll smoothly by as you explore this rich adventure tableau creating an eerie feeling of "being there". You'll encounter 400 diverse, intriguing characters and you'll have to equip yourself with hundreds of weapons, talismans and magic spells necessary for the completion of your trek.

Three entirely different player interface perspectives combine to make *Obitus* a uniquely engaging gaming environment. *Obitus* takes full advantage of your system's capabilities, utilising state-of-the-art graphics and sound support to create the complete fantasy experience as only Psygnosis can.

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Computer Gaming World (ISSN 0744-6667) is published monthly by **Golden Empire Publications, Inc.**, 130 Chaparral Ct. Suite 260, Anaheim Hills, CA 92808. Second-Class Postage paid at Anaheim, CA 92803 and additional mailing offices. Permit #672-910

Postmaster: Send address changes to *Computer Gaming World*, P.O. Box 730, Yorba Linda, CA 92686-8629.
The subscription rate for twelve issues (one year) is $28.00. Canadian and foreign surface subscriptions add $11.00. Foreign air subscriptions are $78.00 per year. All payments must be in U.S. dollars, made by check drawn upon a U.S. bank, Visa, MasterCard, or money order.

Psalms 9:1-2

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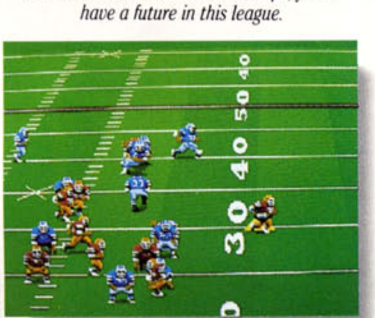
THE MOST HIGHLY RATED GAME IN FOOTBALL.

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What you might not expect is how far inside football you get. Design your own plays. Or choose from Madden's new playbook packed with over 80 offensive and 100 defensive plays. Your game plan has to take into account every facet of the game: injuries, penalties, and, of course, the plan of the guy pacing the far sideline.



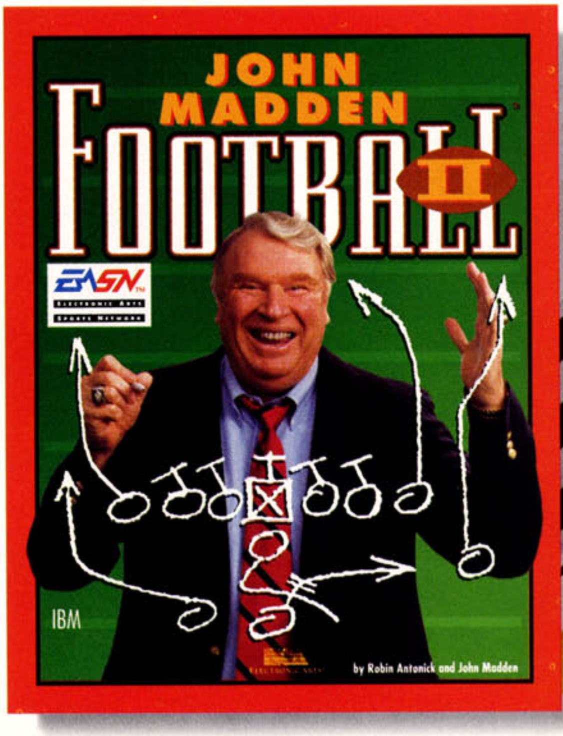
Strategy is the name of the game. If you dominate the one-on-one matchups, you'll have a future in this league.



EASN delivers every dimension of football: 3-D field view and 256-color VGA support.



Madden dissects the action like a surgeon with in-depth analysis on every play.



The challenge to tackle is making the right call, the right one-on-one matchups. Every down. On both sides of the ball. Kind of like chess with shoulder pads.

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It's no wonder John Madden Football earned such positive ratings. *OMNI*, for example, called the original "Computer Sports Game of the Year." And this version's even more intense.

Visit your local EA dealer or call (800) 245-4525 anytime to order. Then see how you rate in Madden's league.

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Circle Reader Service #52

NEW PLAYER RATINGS
JOHN MADDEN CONFIDENTIAL

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Salt Lake City, UT

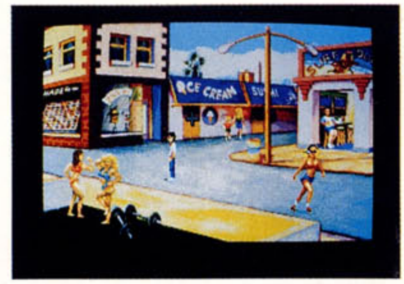
LINKS CHAMPIONSHIP COURSE — HYATT DORADO BEACH: Another course has been made available in this popular 3-D golf simulation, this time taking the action to the Hyatt Dorado Beach East course. Located in Puerto Rico, the tropical setting was made for this Robert Trent Jones custom designed course. IBM ($24.95). Circle Reader Service #1.

Accolade
San Jose, CA

ELVIRA II: THE JAWS OF CERBERUS: The sequel to 1991's Role-Playing Game of the Year looks even better than its predecessor. The magical potion mixing/spellcasting interface is much improved and the high-quality graphics have been retained. Although there are not too many non-combat encounters, there is plenty of both humor and horror to discover and an interesting environment to explore (three "sets" at a motion picture studio which specializes in "B" horror flicks). IBM ($69.95). Circle Reader Service #2



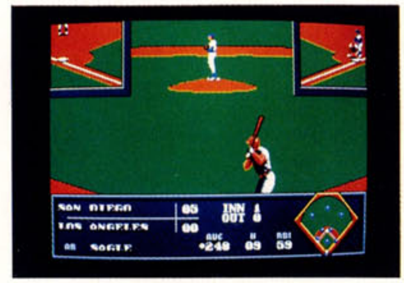
Elvira II: The Jaws of Cerberus



Les Manley in: Lost in L.A.



Mike Ditka Ultimate Football



Bo Jackson Baseball



Nova 9



Are We There Yet?

LES MANLEY IN: LOST IN L.A.: The stars are out in L.A. In fact, they are *way* out, disappearing one by one until only (use loud basso announcer's voice here) Les Manley can save the day (provided he doesn't succumb to California's decadent lifestyle). Complete with plenty of digitized scenes (particularly of gorgeous women who include models, beauty pageant contestants and one who appeared in a *Playboy* layout), it is clear that *real* persons have actually *acted* to make this game come to life. Aside from enjoying a rollicking good adventure game, all we Californians here at *CGW* can add is, "No, it's not *really* that wild out here! (hehehe)" IBM ($59.95). Circle Reader Service #3.

MIKE DITKA ULTIMATE FOOTBALL: There is certainly nothing penultimate about this action/strategy game. Although the play-by-play is resolved by fast reflexes (well, not *that* fast, actually), plenty of strategy is involved in "setting up the pieces" for each play. Play selection (players can even create their own playbooks, teams, leagues, player stats, etc.), variable difficulty levels (optional penalties, fumbles, injuries, etc.), league play and playoffs, plus fine sound support and complete sports-game graphics (freeze-frames, replays, etc.) make this package an all-around champion for the arcade football enthusiast. IBM ($54.95). Circle Reader Service #4.

Data East
San Jose

BO JACKSON BASEBALL: Although the graphics are definitely a notch up from those in EA's *Earl Weaver II*, the gameplay in *Bo Jackson Baseball* is more typical of arcade games which have preceded it. However, the interface for pitching to a specific location is both unique and interesting. The ball bounces back and forth under home plate like a catcher changing the location of his mitt and the player must press the pitch button at exactly the right time to get the

Advertiser Index



Konami's Top Gun Danger Zone requires grace under fire when you unload your arsenal and watch from the onboard missile cam as the sidewinders shoot up your enemies' afterburners.





The top brass greets you on the flight deck of the U.S.S. Brigham where you'll register your call sign.



Hit the auto pilot switch and you're launched right into the heat of battle. Not recommended for the faint of heart or weak of stomach.

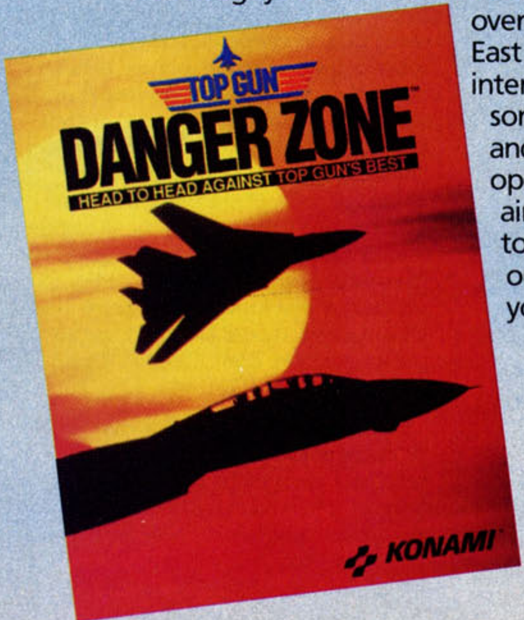




Three seasoned combat flight instructors teach you maneuvers like Vertical Reverses, Spiral Dives, and Fish Hooks. Use these moves to excel among your 12 Top Gun classmates.

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Few aerial combat simulations are so mind jarring you see double. But that's exactly what you'll experience when entering the Top Gun® Danger Zone.™ Turn and burn in an F-14 Tomcat or F-18 Hornet against a friend in the split screen mode. Or fly solo against the best bogeys the CPU can launch in a death duel above the sand dunes over Syria, Libya, and Egypt. Eight Middle East missions including intercept, interference, escort, and air support sorties. Earn the title of Top Gun and you'll be selected for a rescue operation deep inside hostile airspace. But you'll need cunning to match your courage because one hit in this air strike and you're out. **Available for MS-DOS.**



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Circle Reader Service #60



pitch location desired. The early version has some problems with collision detection (players running through each other), but it does not really affect play. Those who liked Cinemaware's "TV Sports" line-up of games should enjoy *Bo Jackson Baseball*. IBM ($49.95). Circle Reader Service #5.

Dynamix
Eugene, OR

NOVA 9: Another in the genre of "hovercraft" games, *Nova 9* is the sequel to *Stellar 7* and bears many similarities to it. This arcade game has the player facing the nine worlds of challenge in the Nova 9 system. Full 256 color VGA and support of all major sound boards adds maximum intensity for this scroll and shoot diversion. IBM ($34.95). Circle Reader Service #6.

Electronic Arts
San Mateo, CA

ARE WE THERE YET?: For those who couldn't get enough of the puzzles in *Games* magazine, here are over 200 computerized mind-benders. Using over 23 different styles of presentation, these puzzles are interspersed with a bit of U.S. geography and history along with a wacky storyline concerning the intrepid Mallard family, whose entire summer vacation hinges upon the player's successful completion of this gauntlet of challenges. While diverting, each puzzle takes about 10-15 minutes to sort out, so there is a lot of distraction packed in that strange-looking box. IBM ($49.95). Circle Reader Service #7.

EARL WEAVER BASEBALL II COMMISSIONER'S DISK II: Now, players can complete their baseball fantasies with *Earl Weaver Baseball II*. By including league drafting, schedule generation, seasonal autoplay and a manager construction set, the challenge of the "long, long" summer is at hand. Current player statistics can now be downloaded, and game results and statistics can be printed out. Even "baseball cards" can be generated! Finally, a ballpark editor has been included for those who really want to hit this game over the fence. IBM ($29.95). Circle Reader Service #8.

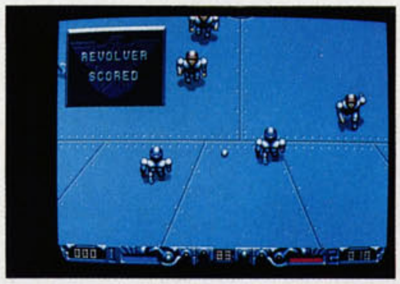
THE COMPLETE PGA TOUR GOLF LIMITED EDITION: This repackage of *PGA Tour Golf* includes in its bigger box the *PGA Tour Golf Tournament Course Disk* (described separately below) and the *History of the PGA Tour* VHS video tape (76 minutes running time). EA is taking a mulligan on any more changes to this long time favorite golf simulator. IBM ($69.95). Circle Reader Service #9.



PGA Tour Golf Limited Edition



Advantage Tennis



Speedball 2: Brutal Deluxe



Team Suzuki



Operation Neptune



Super Solvers Spellbound

PGA TOUR GOLF TOURNAMENT COURSE DISK: *Three* (count 'em) new courses for *PGA Tour Golf*. They include Southwind (home of the St. Jude Classic), Eagle Trace (where the Honda Classic is played) and Scottsdale (where huge crowds flock to see the Phoenix Open). Ten different pros are also there to offer their tips and advice on each hole. IBM ($24.95). Circle Reader Service #10.

Infogrames
France

ADVANTAGE TENNIS: Another tennis game that's more work to play than *real* tennis, this polygon filled exercise in backhands and lobs is an advanced arcade game for the IBM. While the box is wrapped like fine chocolates, this game left a *different* taste in our mouths. The brief rules (in four languages) present the basic keystrokes and outline the gist of tournament play. This game gives new meaning to the term "fault." IBM. Circle Reader Service #11.

Konami
Buffalo Grove, IL

SPEEDBALL 2: BRUTAL DELUXE: One hundred years from now, a new national pastime emerges. Akin to the sport depicted in the film *Rollerball* or the computer game *Projectyle*, *Speedball* is more like dangerously armed men in robotic armor playing a cross between hockey and basketball. Players must take the worst team in league history and turn them into champions. Players can be trained and their equipment upgraded throughout the season, but reflexes and dead aim will be the other team's undoing. Those who enjoyed the "Spotlight Software" version of the game which was previously released by Cinemaware should like the new, improved version. IBM ($39.95). Circle Reader Service #12.

TEAM SUZUKI: This is a basic Sega video arcade style motorcycle racing simulator brought to the IBM courtesy of Konami. More than just a licensed name, the actual Team Suzuki got involved in

DO YOU HAVE THE METTLE TO FACE ZENDICK'S COLD STEEL?





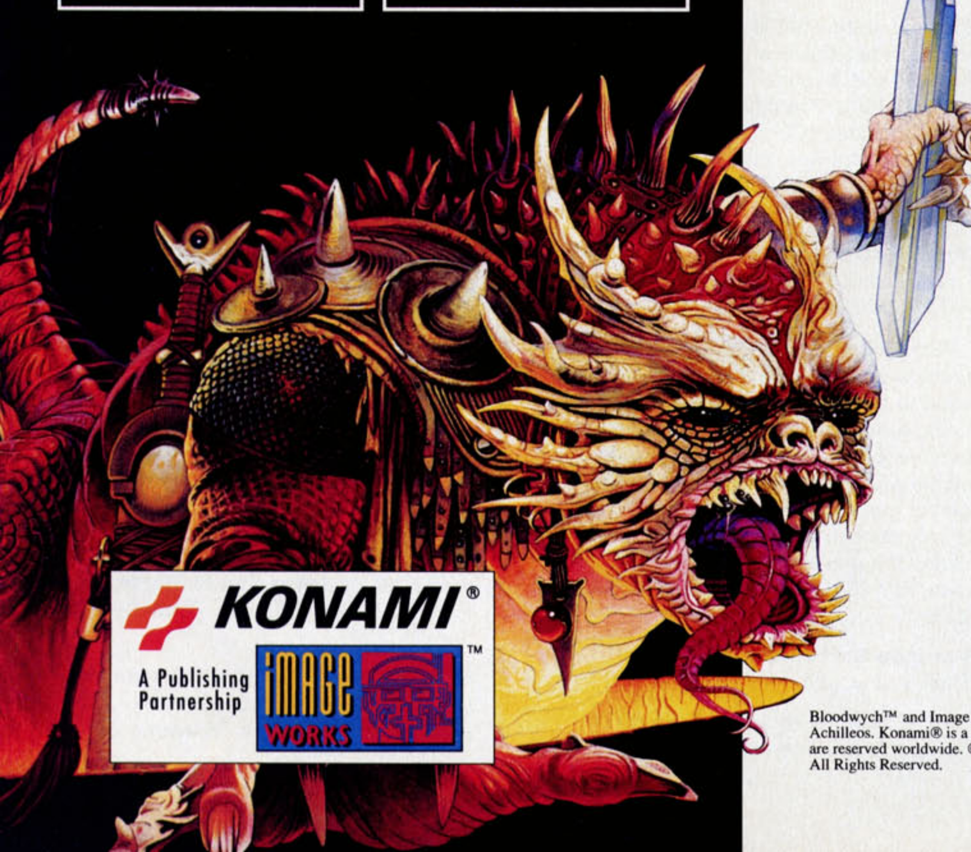


Bloodwych™

An ominous presence has enveloped the small village of Treihadwyl and draped it in a shroud of paralyzing terror. As shadows grow larger the population grows smaller. Zendick the evil overlord and his undead army are feeding on the inhabitants. Now all that stands between the carnage and the land of Trazere is the Bloodwych, a secret alliance of psychic sorcerers. Divided, they would crumble under the overlord's power. But together there is at least a glimmer of hope of defeating the scourge that's devouring the countryside.

GAME PLAY

- Recruit four of the sixteen members of The Bloodwych to assist you on your crusade; the warrior-like "Spades," diplomatic "Hearts" and stealthy "Diamonds."
- Confront deadly creatures in your quest to find the life draining crystals of storing, located in four towers of Treihadwyl castle.
- Journey through the castle in search of weapons, allies and clues that will lead you to the mystic crystals.
- Argue, barter, even lie to other characters to gain control of essential elements. Or simply wield your knives, wands, rings, staves, missiles, fire and bows and arrows to get your way.
- Commend or correct your allies to increase their initiative and ability to fight during combat.



FEATURES

- A dark fantasy role play adventure that pits your strategic thinking against an insane ruler and his mystical forces.
- Fight alone or use the two player split screen that allows you and another to fight side by side or toe to toe.
- Fully communicate with other characters and creatures with an advanced character interaction system.
- Imaginative gameplay enhanced by sophisticated spell casting and combat action.
- Superior, real time 3-D graphics make you feel as though you're right inside the labyrinthine corridors.
- Features icon-based "point-and-click" interface and game save capability.

Available Fall 1991 for MS-DOS.

KONAMI®

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Circle Reader Service #61

the development of this game to give it a good, first-person "feel." With 32 tracks to compete on, the racing season will be long indeed as players shift, brake and accelerate their motorcycles as the filled polygons go whizzing by. Spectacular crash? Watch it again in full replay mode. IBM ($39.95). Circle Reader Service #13.

The Learning Company
Fremont, CA

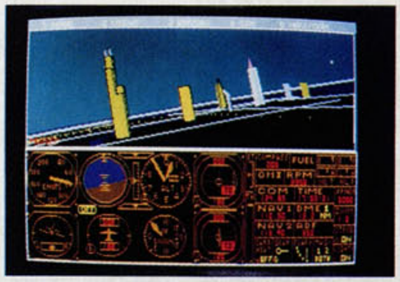
OPERATION NEPTUNE: This clever game of marginal manual dexterity has the player rescuing the world's oceans as they unravel a mystery sent from space. Players must use all of their mathematical skills (ages 10 to adult) to pilot a mini-sub scouring the ocean floor for wreckage of a space capsule. Beginner and expert levels are included and the math problems can be customized. The game includes an on-line calculator and the story is compelling enough to inspire players to want the next clue. IBM ($59.95). Circle Reader Service #14.

SUPER SOLVERS SPELLBOUND!: The spelling bee meets a game show for kids on the IBM. Different "games" such as wordcross (a crossword puzzle style game), flashcard spelling and the classic word searches are all presented. Players can even customize the word library by adding up to 3,000 of their own words to the database. Digitized speech has been added to give words their proper sound, too. IBM ($49.95). Circle Reader Service #15.

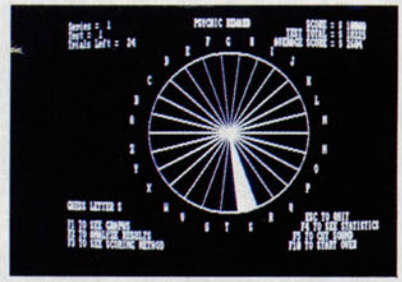
Mallard
Lewisville, TX

SOUND, GRAPHICS AND AIRCRAFT UPGRADE FOR MICROSOFT FLIGHT SIMULATOR: If that's not a title that says it all, what is? This package adds sounds (supporting most major sound cards, including digitized voices and Doppler effects), graphics (to VGA, Super VGA, ATI and Video 7 modes) and aircraft upgrades (to the Concorde SST, a WWII P-51-D, the 1939 Laird Turner Meteor Racer and the Spectrum Beaver RX 550 Ultralight), just like they promised. Take off, eh? IBM ($39.95). Circle Reader Service #16.

SCENERY UPGRADES I-IV FOR MICROSOFT FLIGHT SIMULATOR: Each of these four upgrade packages for the Macintosh version of *Microsoft Flight Simulator* offers the player some new skies to fly through. Set I includes the Eastern seaboard, from Pennsylvania to Florida, Western New York, Lower Michigan, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. Set II includes Japan, Hawaii and the New



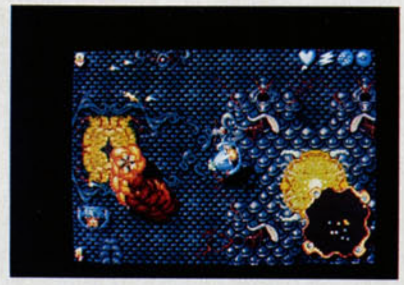
Upgrade for Flight Simulator



Psychic Reward



Millenium: Return to Earth



Amnios



Barbarian II



The Castle of Dr. Brain

England states. Set III features the southern two-thirds of the East coast, the Atlantic and Western Europe (including London, Paris, Frankfurt, etc.). Finally, set IV includes 100+ locations in the American Midwest, plus Hawaii and Japan. Macintosh ($59.95 each). Circle Reader Service #17.

Mind Tech Systems
Los Angeles, CA
(213) 666-7243

PSYCHIC REWARD: This software isn't really a game per se. It is a program used to train a person's intuitive powers using a new principle of 96 percent positive feedback. The "game" plays like an electronic *Wheel of Fortune* with the player guessing which letter will be randomly chosen by the computer. The closer the guess, the more "money" is won. IBM ($49.95). Circle Reader Service #18.

Paragon Software
Hunt Valley, MD

MILLENNIUM: RETURN TO EARTH: Paragon's new menu-driven strategy game has the player building up a new civilization from the smoking remains of the Earth. With humanity's last outpost on Earth's moon, the player must recolonize and generally lead the survival of what remains of the human race. Players must allocate precious resources and build up other colonies. Tough decisions have to be made and a sense of adventuring into the unknown will help the player carry the day. IBM ($39.95). Circle Reader Service #19.

Psygnosis
Brookline, MA

AMNIOS: In this total arcade shoot 'em up, the tiny space ship flies around through ten different worlds in an attempt to kill the deadly spacetime eating organs and/or rescue the encapsulated humanoids. The rules in four languages says it all for this zapper blaster from Europe. Amiga ($49.99). Circle Reader Service #20.

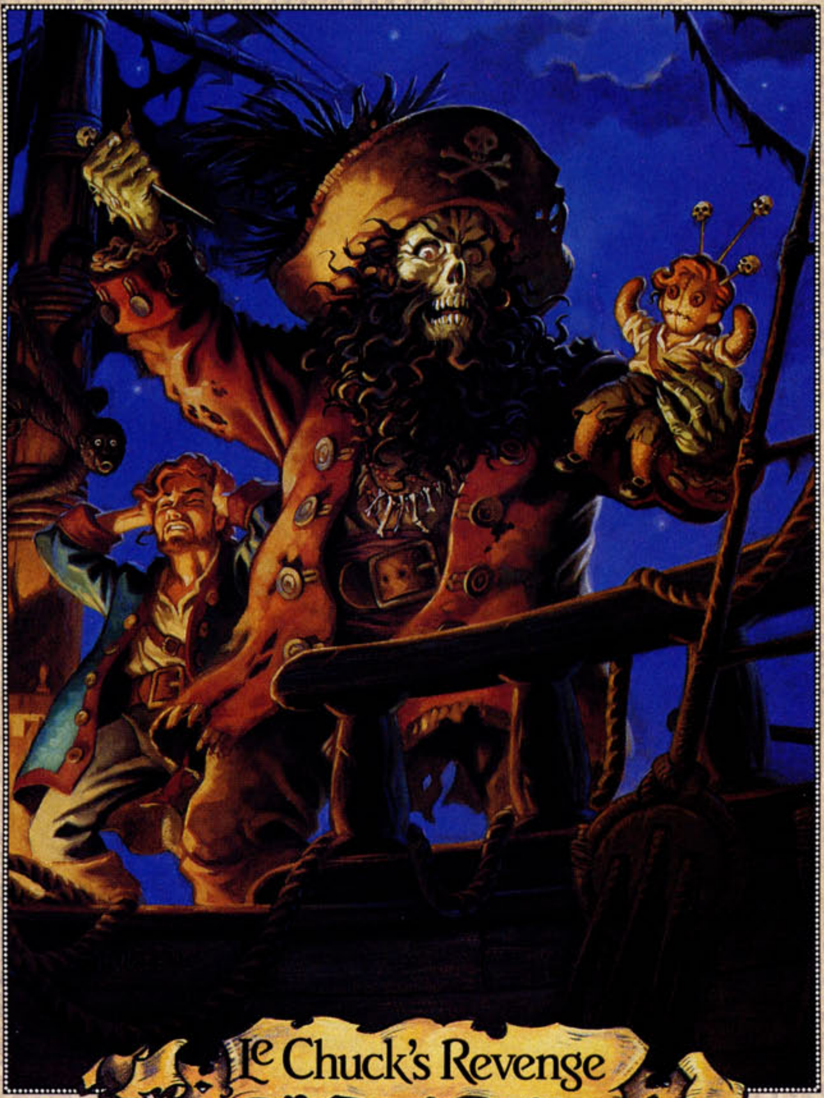
BARBARIAN II: Set in a 2-D scrolling world familiar to arcade gamers everywhere, this standard fantasy quest

NOBODY LAUGHS WHEN THIS PIRATE PLAYS WITH DOLLS.

It's giving Guybrush a headache.
He's become a bore, endlessly telling the story of Monkey Island l. If the braggart doesn't find a new crusade soon, he'll be buying his own grog at the Bloody Lip Bar.

Vengeance is his trademark.™
In Monkey Island l LeChuck's nuptial vows went up in fizz. Now he's back with a new vow—wreak revenge on Guybrush Threepwood.

Who will cough up the Big Whoop?
This legendary treasure of the high seas is up for grabs. There's more at stake than just wealth; for Guybrush it's his last chance to certify himself as a world class pirate on a pirate's ship in a pirate's sea blah blah blah.



Visit faraway islands and get lost.
Take your pick of adventures from Scabb to Phatt Island. And with multiple levels of play, even your average marketing type can feel smart.

We've reassembled the original cast.
Stan's back in a new undertaking. Along with the Voodoo Priestess, Governor Marley, and other favorites from Monkey l. Plenty of cryptic in-jokes, too.

Incredible VGA art.
We hired 256 out-of-work artists from Los Angeles and crammed them six-deep in an office until they came up with pictures we liked.

Incredible music and sound effects.
All of the musicians we wanted are working in '70s comeback bands. So we scored a few tunes ourselves, added some great sound effects and went home.

We did the best we could.
We're not perfect. But we think scanned art, scintillating soundtracks, rehashed jokes and a great story get us close—and over budget, too.

LeChuck's Revenge
MONKEY ISLAND 2™



Haunting secrets from the first game revealed



Illiteracy-driven icon system



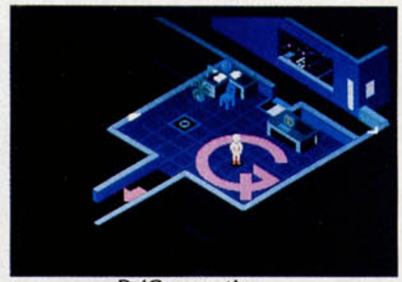
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CD Game Pack II


D/Generation



Software Toolworks World Atlas


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Tracon for Windows

fare (complete with "dungeon dude" villains, as the documentation so charmingly puts it) takes our acrobatic hero (no, not Sonic the Hedgehog, but *almost*) through the forests, caves, dungeons, castles and temples of the land. Billed as the "ultimate in loincloth entertainment" (it's clear the designers have never been to the Hollywood Tropicana Club), fans of this genre won't be disappointed. Amiga ($49.99). Circle Reader Service #21.

Sierra
Coarsegold, CA

CASTLE OF DR. BRAIN: Puzzles, puzzles everywhere, but not a spot to think... The *Castle of Dr. Brain* features plenty of those nasty logic puzzles that drive people crazy, yet seem so easy once they are explained. With several difficulty levels to choose from, "brains" of sizes will meet their match here. Featuring hand-painted, scanned VGA graphics, the standard parserless "Sierra interface" and full sound support, players solve these puzzles to get words which allow them to solve combinations which open doors to different parts of the castle. IBM ($49.95). Circle Reader Service #22.

Software Toolworks
Novato, CA

CD GAME PACK II: This cavalcade of classics put on one CD demonstrates some of the storage power of that technology with regard to game applications. The pack includes *Chessmaster 2100, Robot Tank, Beyond the Black Hole, Life & Death, Gin King/Cribbage King, Checkers, Loopz, Puzzle Gallery, Backgammon* and *Bruce Lee Lives* (pictured). It requires the MSCDEX version 2.1 or higher to go with the CD drive. IBM ($99.95). Circle Reader Service #23.

D/GENERATION: Touted as "virtual reality meets action adventure," this game simply simply doesn't live up to the claim. While an interesting 45 degree angle 3-D action game, the basics are scroll-and-shoot with some logic and problem-solving puzzles thrown in. The trick, of course, is to figure out how the D/Generation organism is currently disguising itself, since it could be the chair, the lamp or the floor! IBM ($49.95). Circle Reader Service #24.

THE SOFTWARE TOOLWORKS WORLD ATLAS: AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 WAYS!: Packed with useful information, including topographical, oceanic and other types of maps, this electronic atlas has obviously been around for a while (*East* Germany?). Full of fast facts and statistics, it might take the computer to access the information, just because there's so much of it there! Reports can be customized and merged into other documents (for a professional presentation). IBM ($59.95). Circle Reader Service #25.

Ubi Soft
Sausalito, CA

JIMMY CONNORS PRO TENNIS TOUR: Another entry into the world of bit-mapped tennis games, this one offers complete tournament play for singles or doubles, a variety of courts and "roll your own" players (male *and* female). Again, one's dexterity must be quite high to keep up with the action before a player can ever hope to score his first point. IBM ($49.95). Circle Reader Service #26.

Virgin Games
Irvine, CA

SHUTTLE: THE SPACE FLIGHT SIMULATOR: One can't help but get the feeling that there must be something classified in this product. It is such a detailed representation of the actual Space Shuttle that NASA could use it as a training tool. Zillions of buttons, switches and levers have to be operated by the player to help keep the missions played on course. By the time a player is ready to quit playing this one, he or she will know where the HSI Select Source TACAN button is, that's for sure! IBM ($59.99). Circle Reader Service #27.

Wesson International
Austin, TX

TRACON FOR WINDOWS: For those who liked *Tracon* (the aircraft controller simulator), here's an opportunity to try it out using through the popular *Windows* environment. Special Windows features include flightstrip printing, more sectors to fly in, a round radarscope, the compass rose is always available and Sound-Blaster sound support. The on-screen soft buttons and switches of Windows interface will add a lot of enjoyment to *Tracon*'s many partisans. IBM ($59.95). Circle Reader Service #28. CGW



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The Out-of-Towner

Konami's Predator 2

by David M. Wilson

The Los Angeles Police Department has the unenviable task of keeping peace in a virtual war zone. To add anything else to their already overburdened capacity would be like pouring a fresh pot of coffee into an already full cup. So, when a strange alien creature comes into town on a hunting spree, the force is hard-pressed to hunt it down. Indeed, they face particular difficulty because the creature is chameleon-like, able to camouflage itself in virtually any setting, as well as having the capacity to move at a speed beyond comprehension.

In **Konami**'s *Predator 2*, players have the opportunity to take on the role of Detective Mike Harrigan in a four-level arcade-style free-for-all. Players view the action from over Harrigan's shoulder as he walks down the street and blows away almost everything and everyone in sight with any weapon he can get his hand on. One thing is certain — the game doesn't suffer from lack of action.



TITLE:	Predator 2
SYSTEMS:	Amiga, C-64/128 and IBM
REVIEWED:	Amiga, C-64/128
PRICE:	$19.95
DEVELOPER:	Mirrorsoft
PUBLISHER:	Konami Buffalo Grove, IL

Konami Gun Exchange

There are five different weapons available to Harrigan, from a .45 magnum automatic pistol (we don't know whether it is the Grizzly or Wildey model) through the Mark III rifle (somewhat better, but with the trade-off of firing at a slow rate), a Mark II shotgun (which fires a bit faster and more effectively), a Mark I assault shotgun (the most effective and rapid-firing weapon) and onward to an M-203 grenade launcher (only fires once, but destroys all enemies currently on-screen). In this reviewer's gunsight, the best all-around weapon for players to use is the Mark I.



Players will quickly learn that the key to the game is to constantly pick up fresh ammo, just like one gobbles power pills in *Pac-Man*. The reason for this is that all the weapons cycle through the available ammo at a fairly brisk clip and there is a stiff penalty for players who run out of ammunition. When one does run out, the program immediately issues a weapon rated one level lower than the player-character's current weapon and five fresh ammo magazines. This can, of course, significantly hinder the player's progress in the game, but it should not happen very often (if at all) when the player manages to keep one eye on the ammo and continually acquire ammunition magazines as they become available. Ammunition magazines are acquired in typical arcade game fashion by shooting them as they appear on-screen. Players should be aware, however, that shooting the rocket icon more than once will *immediately* set it off and one just might want to time its activation a bit more carefully for optimum efficiency.

Predators, Two

The Amiga version is beautiful, incorporating excellent graphics and awesome action. In fact, the graphics intentionally add to the *difficulty* of the game as well as the look. This is because the same color-schemes are used for innocents, as well as criminals. Hence, the fast-shooting player is forced to *look* at the icons rather than just glancing around the screen and picking out targets at random. This makes for a type of "Hogan's Alley" (F.B.I. shooting/training range) effect and adds to the challenge of the game. If the player shoots too many innocent people, he loses a life. Fortunately, the game designers allow for a lot of "accidents," so the player doesn't have to be *too* careful.

In addition, the "You lost, buddy!" screens have a strong cinematic appearance. (We'll wager the alert reader wants to know how we know about those!) Depending on how the player loses, by running out of lives or shooting too many innocent people, there is an appropriate animation of either Harrigan being carried away in an ambulance or being called into the captain's office for a disciplinary interview which results in the player's suspension from the force.

The crosshairs line up very differently on the C-64/128 version. It is extremely disappointing and must be so stated, even though this reviewer knows as well as anyone how badly Commodore owners desire software support — but support like this is very inadequate. The game takes forever to load, even with a fast-load

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cartridge. Splotchy icons dot the screen with pictures that can hardly be recognizable as enemies.



Protection Racket

The Amiga box indicates that there is no on-disk copy protection, but that is not entirely true. Once into the manual, Amiga owners are surprised with the message: "Attention Amiga Users. Due to the nature of this program, the disks have been specially formatted to ensure minimal disk swapping while maintaining fluid game play. Therefore, conventional back-up copies and hard disk install is not available. Contact Konami's customer support for details regarding necessary back-up copies." Upon contacting Konami's customer support line for more information, this writer was greeted with, "Hey, dude, I was trying to get ahold of you all day." Upon responding that this was highly unlikely, since this was an initial call for information and the technician had no reason to have ever heard of this writer (after all, even the prodigious fame that surrounds *CGW* reviewers was unlikely to have preceded this modest scribe without benefit of introduction), his response was, "Oh, wow dude." After asking for details on back-ups, he said, "Oh, dude... just send in your original disks and we'll send you some that can be backed up." To say the least, the customer service people were far from professional. The consumer is not getting what is advertised on the box and the only way to get it is to send in the original disks and wait for the "unprofessional" service department to correct the problem.

Bargain Basement?

If *Predator 2* were a "great" game, it might be worth the wait. The game is tremendously frustrating, however. For a computer game not to offer a "save-game" option, at least upon the conclusion of each level, suggests that the development team is out of touch with today's market. Players are forced to begin anew on the initial level after each loss, as though there were some mysterious virtue in traversing the same ground incessantly. This tends to reduce the game to the point of becoming a digitized treadmill rather than an exciting arcade experience.

On the positive side, however, *Predator 2* offers enough action for even the most bloodthirsty player. At the same time, the game design makes at least some attempt to distinguish between innocents and enemies in this exercise in killing or being killed. So, at the much lower-than-average computer game price at which *Predator 2* is offered, the game may be a satisfying choice for those who cannot get enough super-macho challenges. All in all, however, as in most areas of life, one gets what one pays for and **Konami**'s *Predator 2* is no exception. **CGW**

THE RUMOR BAG

by the Honorable Huey B. Short

I was watching C-SPAN to see if they were broadcasting my "Special Orders" address on the disastrous consequences of disk-based copy protection, when I observed the most blatant act of plagiarism since the last presidential campaign or my own use of the "Unknown Comic"'s schtick. Here was a United States Congressman wearing a bag over his head and claiming that he was embarrassed at the number of congresspersons who regularly bounce checks in their personal checking accounts. I chuckled, realizing that he was never going to convince the U.S. Congress to experience a mass conversion to budget balancing whether he was speaking of public or private budgets.

Some conversions are fairly interesting, however, and I couldn't help but think of the IBM version of *Rampart*, the coin-op game in which players set cannons, repulse assaults from ever larger waves of sailing vessels and rebuild castle walls for the next assault. The game has been very popular in the coin-op version and should be extremely addictive in the modem-capable version currently being developed by **Electronic Arts**.

I must have dozed off (actually, in public life we call it "subliminal problem-solving using discretionary time-shifting"), because a new speaker had taken the microphone and started to talk about the sanctity of life. Now, I believe in the sanctity of life and I am particularly excited about a new product from **Maxis**. *SimLife* is a microcosm of *SimEarth* in that it reflects the evolution of life-forms in a smaller geographical area (an area approximately the size of a county). The game is *not*, however, a re-run of *SimEarth* on a smaller scale. The new product follows Richard Dawkins' evolutionary theory as expressed in books like *The Selfish Gene* and *The Blind Watchmaker* rather than following the Gaia Hypothesis used in *SimEarth*. Since Dawkins is one of the foremost critics of Gaia theory, the collaboration of **Maxis** and Dawkins immediately after the publication of *SimEarth* is intriguing.

The phone rang and interrupted both my memories of **Maxis**' future product and my attempt to stay current with congressional thought. It was one of those calls in which the caller tried to disguise her sensuous female voice by placing a handkerchief over the mouthpiece. "Mr. Short," she attempted to drop her modulation even lower, "we need your help." The damsel in distress drowned the meandering modulations from C-SPAN as she continued, "We're not really going to see the kinds of products that we want until more people have CD-capable machines. We need you to spread the word."

Spread the word? What did this mysterious caller mean? I've talked about **Origin**'s plea for purchasers of *Wing Commander II* to purchase a CD-ROM drive; I've described **Interplay**'s *Buzz Aldrin's Race Into Space* and how it is a natural for a CD version; I've leaked stories about products like **Virgin**'s *Guest* that are being designed for CD-based gaming and I was preparing to write about two other games that are naturals for CD-based products: **Electronic Arts**' *Holmes* and **Activision**'s *Leather Goddesses of Phobos 2*.

The former is **Electronic Arts**' foray into graphic adventures and is expected to be about 20 MB once it is exploded. It has a musical score that emulates the music of the late 19th century (imagine, a Rob Hubbard score without a running bass line!) and some very nice graphic touches that bring the pen-and-ink world of *The Strand* magazine into the multi-colored world of computer games (particularly the way shadowing and fog is handled in the backgrounds). The beautiful map of Victorian London that looks like a colorful version of the original *Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective* boardgame and functions much like the map interface in *Rise of the Dragon* is also very impressive. *Holmes* does not attempt to use digitized voices in the game, but it is possible that a CD version would do so.

Leather Goddesses of Phobos 2 opted for plenty of digitized voice (the game features over an hour of digitized audio) and comes complete with a hardware device that connects to the printer port. The device allows enhanced sound and voice *without* having a sound board and the game will even include a software module that will let players create their own music with the hardware device. The game will come on ten floppy disks and is, in the words of producer William Volk "a CD game on floppy disk." With a story by Steve Meretzky and the capacity to play the game three different times as different characters (a male, a female and an alien), the game should be very popular.



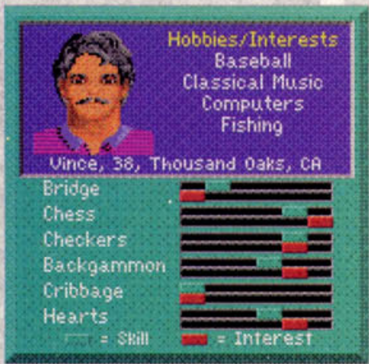
I told my caller about these products, but she would not be dissuaded from her course of action. She wanted me to declare my candidacy for President of the United States under the American Interactive Party banner. She had even created a slogan for the campaign, "A CD in Every Computer" and envisioned a platform that would be remembered as the "New Digital."

My eyes wandered back toward C-SPAN as a midwestern representative waxed eloquently about farm policy. My mind was torn between talking about **Maxis**' *SimFarm* game and agreeing to her political scheme. The farm game has economic elements (buying land and selecting the right crops for making maximum profits), as well as scientific aspects (effects of crop rotation and use/non-use of pesticides) and the ability to customize the farm to reflect the player's actual climate and chosen crop.

I told her about the game and she responded that I wouldn't have to give up computer games to campaign under the CD banner, just my column. "Give up my column?" I queried.

"Sure," she responded, "you don't think the guys at *CGW* are going to let you keep your column if they have to provide equal access for all your opponents, do you?" I conceded that I didn't think so. So, I agreed to the AIP's draft and chose Johnny Wilson as my running mate (he's always wanted to be in politics and he's used to being called "Number Two"). I hereby immediately take a leave of absence from writing "The Rumor Bag" and declare myself a candidacy for the presidency. Pat Paulson, Batman, Mickey Mouse and all the rest of you write-ins can eat your hearts out. My bag's in the ring! **CGW**

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(Actual TSN Screens shown)



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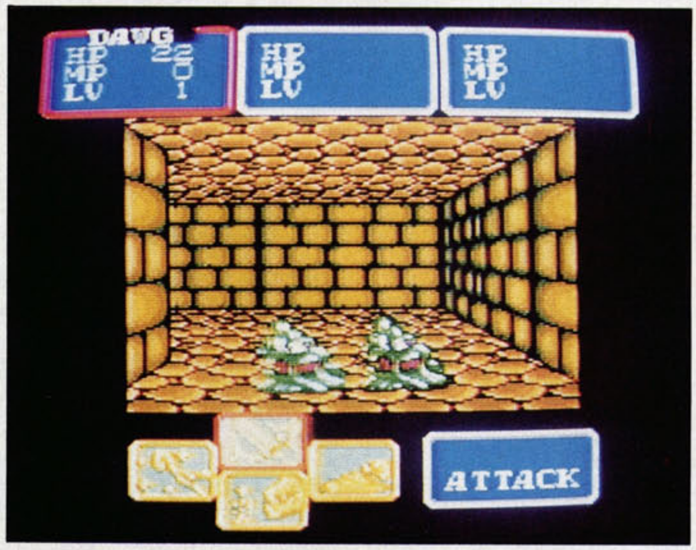
TITLE:	Shining in the Darkness
SYSTEM:	Sega Genesis
PRICE:	$79.95
PUBLISHER:	Sega Redwood City, CA

Sega Sets a Shining Example

Shining in the Darkness *for the Genesis*

by Peter Olafson





S*hining in the Darkness* (*SITD*) couldn't have been better named. This role-playing game — built around a giant nine-level dungeon — is a bright spot in the sometimes shadowy world of Genesis adventures. Whispers before the game's release had it pegged as a *Dungeon Master*-on-console and it is not hard to see why. The dungeon *does* occupy most of the game. True enough, there's a castle where one can send the adventuring party of three for new assignments and tips, as well as a village for the inevitable equipment upgrades, game saves (via a battery backup), local atmosphere and a good healing sleep.

Still, the castle and village are little more than pit stops — more like graphic menus than actual locations — with no intervening countryside to cross, so the dungeon provides the substance of the game.

It's easy to discount *SITD* at first look, and maybe even at second. The story line doesn't add anything new to the console universe's standard good-versus-evil arrangement. There is a fellow named Dark Sol, a man in serious need of a manicure and tinted contacts — to judge from the package — with his eye on the kingdom of Thornwood. The princess Jessa, traveling to the village shrine under escort by the player's father, Mortred, has vanished. (It's a wonder there are any spare princesses left to kidnap in the videogame world.) Rather than checking seedy motels from here to Dubuque, the king dispatches the player's character (and, eventually, two spell-casting companions) to the Labyrinth (the local dungeon) in order to obtain any evidence (and/or hope) of the princess's presence.

Initially, the Labyrinth seems little different than the dungeons in any of Sega's other role-playing games — right down to the scrolling routines and wall tiles. Each Slimy Ooze (the most common creature in the entry area) has two gold pieces in its pockets and is, apparently, armed with an unsharpened No. 2 pencil. (Pockets? A Slimy Ooze has pockets?) Those who travel according to first impressions will not travel far. For those who have patience, however, *Shining in the Darkness* is a relatively late bloomer and really starts to flower once one completes the initial quest.

The first evidence that *SITD* is something rather out of the ordinary comes in combat when overmatched monsters begin to flee the field (a decided improvement over the chop-until-dropped tactics used by most computer-controlled bad guys) or try to summon help. In this more realistic combat, "critical hits" (each called "an awesome blow" in the game's vernacular) become more important and first-strike surprises and ambushes are more integral to party strategy.

There are also sections of dungeon which force the party to *ascend* stairs, suggesting the experience one might have garnered in *Bane of the Cosmic Forge*'s mines or pyramid. One spell provides fairly elaborate (and pleasantly conversational) item identification, while another permits a form of automapping. The game also features spinners, magic drainers, no-magic zones, pits, invisible walls and more, as part of the designers' quest in creating variety within the context of dungeon exploration.

Finally, although the game does not handle conquered territory with a "once cleared, always clear" philosophy, conquering a level of the dungeon does seem to bring down the monster population to manageable levels whenever the party returns to that area.

In addition to the dungeon, gamers will also want to visit the village. It is a row of buildings that scrolls smoothly in both direc-

tions: a shrine (for saving the game, assessing one's progress and resurrecting deceased members of the party), a weapons shop, an armorer, an alchemist, an inn and, later in the game, a trader.

The inn is a special treat. The music is audible well down the street, grows gradually louder as one approaches and blasts the party in the face as it enters. The characters arrayed at the bar and tables actually look at the party when they speak, and their conversation — mostly color commentary — changes as the story unfolds. Unfortunately, as with most console "role-playing games," the role-playing tends to emphasize "stat enhancement" rather than conversation and exposition.

And... how to put this delicately... the characters don't all look like *Speed Racer*. From the slumbering cartoon wizard who acts as "master of ceremonies" for the opening menus through the rounded, slightly-silly creations one encounters throughout the game, *Shining in the Darkness* owes more to the **Walt Disney Studios** style of animation than to the traditional Japanimation most videogamers have come to expect.

Moreover, given all the dialogue in the village and at the castle, it is a more text-heavy game than videogamers may be accustomed to. The writing itself, while simple, seems to have been rigorously checked for adherence to American grammar.

Alas, one cannot talk to the monsters in the game, but then again, one can *never* talk to the monsters in these games. They are apparently all dedicatedly irrational creatures with very bad headaches. On the plus side, *SITD* doesn't re-use monster graphics *ad infinitum* with the same gang rendered in a different palette and featuring more hit points. So, there's a nice variety of creatures to send back to their maker.

Admittedly, the monsters here don't *do* much but stand there with egg on their ugly faces. The more elaborate animations seem reserved to end-of-level "boss monsters" like giant capering crabs or hatching dinosaur eggs. The others waver around a bit, but they never actually raise a sword or even an slimy oozing fist at the party, so it is difficult to think of them as more than target practice.

Nevertheless, minor graphic touches abound. The walls have a torch-lit shimmer (and wise gamers will watch their step with those walls that shimmer a bit more than the others). The control icons are all charmingly animated. A train of "Zs" issues from monsters you've put to sleep. The player's perspective somersaults when the party wanders into a pit. Every spell has its own visual effect on screen, and the icy orbit of the "freeze" spell really seems to come right out of the screen at the player.

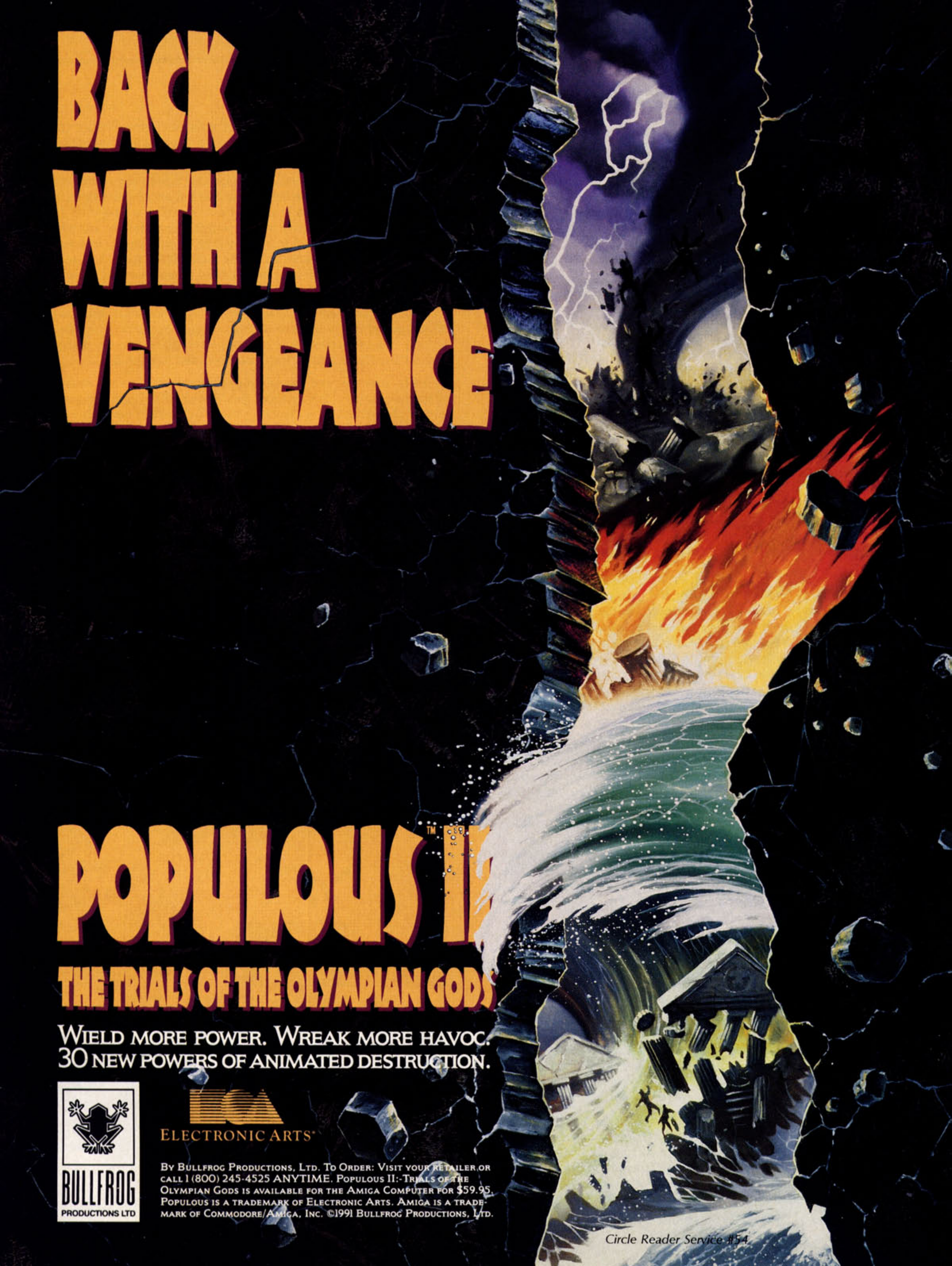
The downside is that, even with all these nice features, *Shining in the Darkness* is still a hack-and-slash adventure where the story is kicked along by combat, the puzzles are garden variety (a la "put the round peg in the round hole") and the conversations are one-way streets. The mechanics of the console RPG *do* advance a notch in *SITD*, but it is not the full-blown CRPG that many gamers were hoping for. Nevertheless, considering the limited role-playing products previously available for the Genesis, *Shining in the Darkness* is a *decided* step out of the one-dimensional darkness of videogames past. **CGW**



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Animation Waltz

Two Computer Animation Programs

by Roy Wagner

When it comes to animation, Walt Disney ranks at the top in detail and quality. There is a price to Disney animation, however. It does not come easy. To achieve its level of sophistication requires hours of skillful work per on-screen second and years from idea to final product. It is also the result of experience and the use of the techniques known to produce good animation. The cartoons of Warner Brothers (featuring Bugs Bunny and the other Looney Tunes characters) are certainly much simpler, yet very funny and satisfying in their own distinctive style.

It is no different with two relatively new animation packages for the home computer. The one from **Walt Disney Software** is thorough, but the product based on Bugs Bunny is a lot more fun for the casual user. This review only looks at two of the many animation software products available for your home computer. Many new graphic software products also include ways to produce animation.

What's Up, Doc?

The Bugs Bunny Cartoon Workshop from **Hi Tech Expressions** for the IBM PC and compatibles is a complete animation package, although it does not include drawing tools. It is ideal for teaching the basics of animated video production, *without* requiring any artistic expertise. All the artwork has been completed and the user simply acts as the director. One selects the cartoon characters (actors), backgrounds (stage), sound effects and musical score. Then, one simply adds text bubbles where desired and it is "showtime." A special "Junior" mode makes it easy for children or any beginner to put together an animated cartoon and a "Master" mode gives the advanced user full control over the animation.

The would-be director has a cast of characters which includes: Bugs Bunny, Wile E. Coyote, the Road Runner, Daffy Duck, Sylvester, Tweety and Elmer Fudd (all dutifully licensed and trademarked). The program comes with a tutorial that introduces all the features of the program and, to make it even more intuitive, uses icons (pictures representing commands) to perform all the steps needed to put together an animated presentation. The interface allows keyboard input to select the necessary icons, but really shines with a mouse.

Cartoons in *The Bugs Bunny Cartoon Workshop* are structured from the scenery up. One starts by selecting a "stage." Then, as scenes change, other stages can be added as needed. It is, of course, possible to jump back and forth between one or more of the same stages. In addition to the variety in stage scenery, there is a choice between "types" of stage. Some stages are static backgrounds, while others are moving (an old movie technique, first used in silent movies, which gives action to characters in the scene). One can, of course, add props to any stage and some of the props can even be animated to give the illusion of a zoom effect. Backgrounds for title and conclusion screens are also provided.

Next, actors and other props are added. These can be flipped or rotated to be in different positions. Each actor comes with a number of pre-animated actions. These can be viewed prior to selection. An actor is then positioned on the scene and its action from start to finish can be defined. An action sequence can be edited to produce the action wanted or direction of actor's movement changed for special effects. Actors can easily be removed from a scene or moved in front of props or other actors.

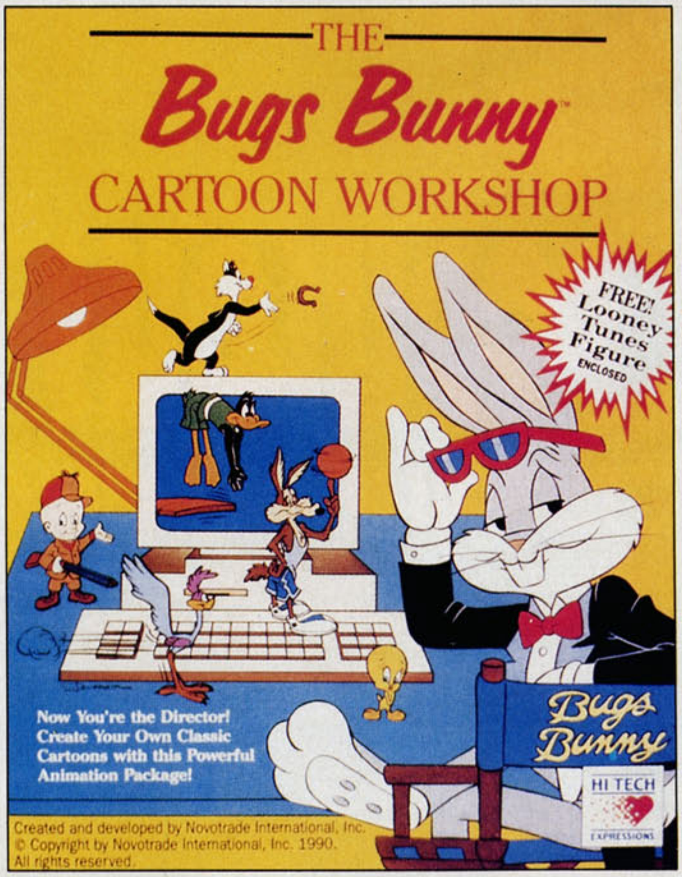
Special effects can be added to an animation; e.g. setting the scene's duration (the number of different action frames) and the speed of the action (the rate at which those frames are displayed from very fast to very slow). It is even possible to create a transition from one scene to another by using fade boxes or fade pixels. Adding or removing sounds and musical themes to each scene is also possible.

One can also create a variety of text bubbles which can be positioned anywhere in the scene (but *always* appearing *behind* any actors). To add variety, the size of text bubbles can be changed and different text colors/fonts can be used in each bubble.

Finally, one can use the editing options to cut, move, duplicate or insert a scene. This enables the "director" to continue the action of characters by instructing them to repeat their current action, e.g. walking across a stage. Then, it is a simple matter to save the custom cartoons to to disk for later viewing or as gifts for someone else to enjoy, even if they do not have the Cartoon Workshop program itself. In fact, if a computer projection system is available, these "cartoons" make great presentations at school or work. Two or more cartoons can



TITLE:	Bugs Bunny Cartoon Workshop
SYSTEM:	IBM
PRICE:	$49.95
PROTECTION:	None
DESIGNERS:	Novotrade International
PUBLISHER:	Hi Tech Expressions New York, NY



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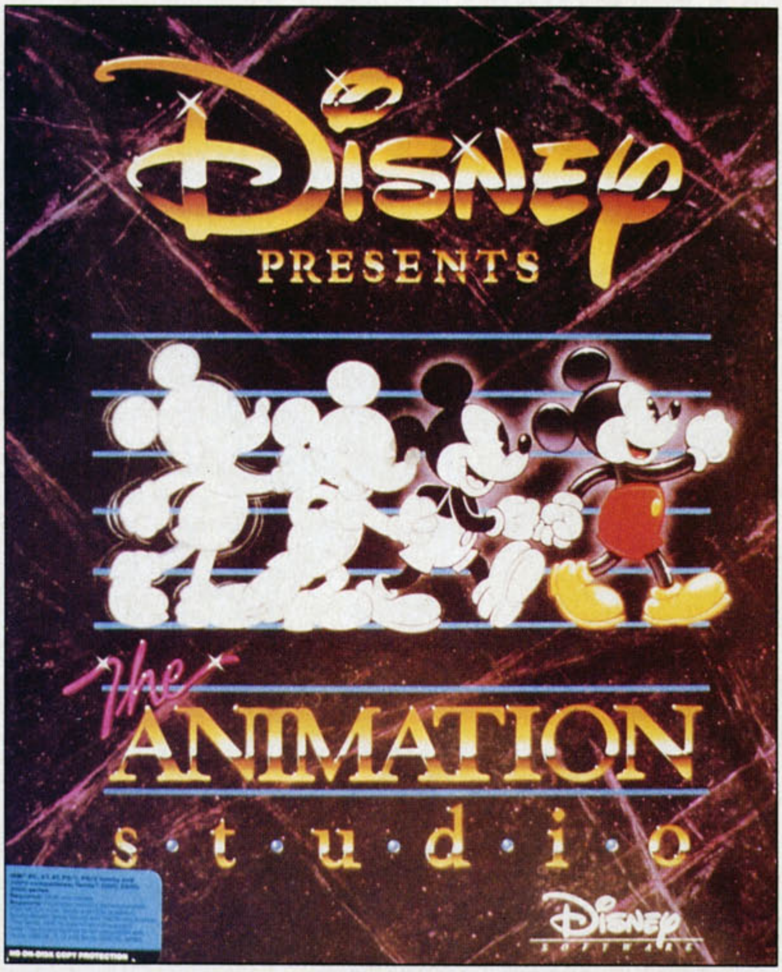
STRATEGY GAME OF THE YEAR

COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

AdLib SOUND

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TITLE:	The Animation Studio
SYSTEMS:	Amiga, IBM
PRICE:	$129.95
PROTECTION:	Documentation Look-Up
DESIGNER:	Reichart Von Wolfsheild
PUBLISHER:	Walt Disney Software Burbank, CA

be linked (saved together) for longer animated "features" and a single frame can be printed or saved to a format compatible with *Deluxe Paint* to be used in other custom presentations.

This program can be run from either a hard drive or floppy disk(s). It requires 640K and is *not* copy protected. The documentation is very good. The tutorial teaches all that anyone needs to know in order to quickly and easily produce impressive animation with this tool.

Sorcerer's Apprentice

The Animation Studio from **Walt Disney Software** is a complete animation package, including (and requiring) a drawing program. It is and has been used by multimedia developers as a powerful toolkit for creating computerized animations. Though it comes with some outstanding animated samples from Disney, they are *not* in color and would-be "directors" cannot use the samples in their original animations. Several legal warnings are displayed each time they are viewed that make it clear that users must provide their own backgrounds and animated characters/objects. There are a limited number of sounds provided. On the Amiga (reviewed here), standard Amiga, SMUS sound, music and instrument files can be used.

A separate "Getting Started" tutorial introduces the basic features of the program. Pull-down menus and icon commands can be accessed with a mouse and, for those *sans rodentia*, keyboard commands (single keys) are available for nearly all options.

An animation is made up of many cels. Each cel (single piece of art) must be created with this program. Truly, this program gives its users control of even the most primary level of animation. The history of animation and various basic techniques are discussed in great detail in the manual.

The beauty of the program is that each cel is drawn on a computer equivalent of a piece of onionskin (transparent paper) and the artist (and anyone who uses this program had better be one) can see several previous cels as he or she draws the next cel. A powerful set of drawing tools, similar to those in *Deluxe Paint*, are available to computer artists. These give one the capability of copying a previous image and only slightly changing it to create the illusion of animation.

As is the case in cel-based film mode, one's first drawings are always done in "Pencil Test" mode (i.e. black and white "sketches"). In this mode, cels can be animated at any time to review the progress. After one is satisfied with the way the animation flows, it is then possible to color each sequence using the "Ink & Paint" mode. Computer artists have access to a palette of 32 colors which can be customized to their personal color preferences. Color dithering and cycling further enhance what one is able to accomplish with these colors. Backgrounds for the animations created with *The Animation Studio* can be created with either the drawing tools with this program or imported as an IFF file from other creativity tools.

Once the inking is finished, one can use an exposure sheet to edit the cels used, change their duration and timing, and list when events such as sounds and music will occur. One can also cut, copy and paste cels working from this area of the program, and an instrument command allows artists to specify a type of sound (instrument), as well as its pitch and volume, for each sequence.

This program can be run from either a hard drive or floppy disk(s). It requires 512K on the Amiga (640K on the IBM), but more than one megabyte is really needed if anyone is serious about using this program.

Though the packaging sticker notes that there is no on-disk copy protection, potential purchasers should note that it *is* copy protected and requires finding references in the manual each time one wishes to access a different mode. (Very annoying!) The documentation is good, but does not give enough examples for using the advanced features. It is, however, outstanding in teaching the "secrets" of good animation, even though the tutorial does not leave one feeling entirely comfortable in using the program.

The End (A Roy Wagner Cartoon)

For quick and easy animations, *The Bugs Bunny Cartoon Workshop* is highly recommended (especially for children and beginners). It is possible to actually create some very funny cartoons and just playing with the program's options is very satisfying. For serious cel animation, requiring lots of work and time, (and most likely worth all the effort put into it), *The Animation Studio* is recommended. It gives its users much greater control over all the details necessary to create original animations. They are both outstanding, but differently targeted, products. So, as the pig says, "That's All, Folks!" **CGW**

Elvira II: The Jaws of Cerberus

"THE EARTH OPENED. ONE BY ONE THE MOST HIDEOUS MONSTERS

OF GOTHIC HORROR

CRAWLED THROUGH THE PORTAL. THE NIGHTMARE HAD BEGUN!"



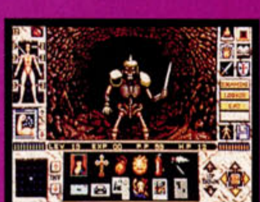
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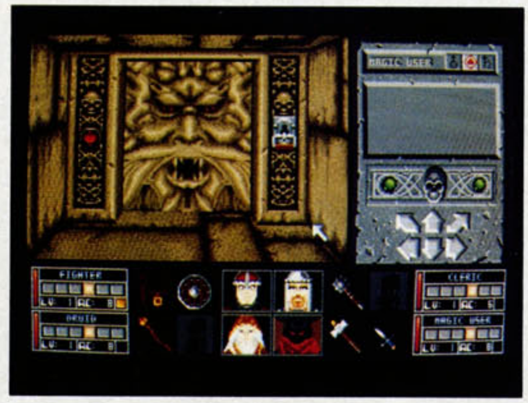


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Entrails From *The Black Crypt*

A Sneak Preview of Electronic Arts' Role-Playing Game

by Allen Greenberg

Kilobytes below the surface of the earth, two creatures battle for domination. *Mouze*, the slippery young upstart, at one time made his home exclusively on featureless grey desktops, curled up at the feet of respectably conservative and uncaring application programs. Now, he juggles inventory, casts spells, navigates mazes and directs sword thrusts with increasingly rapid and intuitive ease. His opponent, *Keeboord*, was once the gateway through which all orders and commands were given. Now, he oozes ink from paper-cuts inflicted by accurately placed point-and-click assaults. If this continues much longer, Keeboord wonders if he will not find himself hiding behind the skirts of wizened legal secretaries, grateful to find his original vocation still intact?

Whatever the ultimate outcome of this "Interface War," however, it is apparent that aficionados of real-time, intuition-based computer role-playing games are about to enjoy a major victory with Electronic Arts' release of *The Black Crypt*.

Crypt is very definitely a descendant of the often-referred-to *Dungeon Master*, a program which earned a tremendous following and actually managed to spawn an entire sub-genre of computer role-playing. Its gut-level, three-dimensional view of the action, along with the player's ability to graphically seize and use whatever dungeon paraphernalia may be found in that view, gave the program tremendous appeal. Perhaps, the most exhilarating aspect was the addition of real-time action — combat where dungeon creatures could strike at their foul discretion, rather than wait politely until the player had finished issuing commands to his adventure party.

Since then, **SSI**'s *Eye of the Beholder* introduced a slightly watered-down version of the gut-level interface to MS-DOS users. At the same time, several less ambitious releases have appeared on the market, largely for the Amiga and Atari ST. The latter have attempted to graft the interface onto games which were otherwise less interesting. *The Black Crypt*, an outstanding program written on the Amiga, offers a "turbo-charged" version of the gut-level interface and is generally one of the most enjoyable and challenging romps through a dungeon that this reviewer has experienced to date.

Crypt is a massive dungeon containing about twenty areas of varying size and complexity. These areas are interconnected by doorways, both natural and supernatural, which replace the traditional stairways found in previously explored dungeons. The player must explore and conquer these areas in order to progress through a dozen levels of difficulty and complete the game. Each level of difficulty is in a different location within the crypt and the player is only allowed access to two or three areas at a time.

The adventuring party is made up of four members, the generation of which has been extremely simplified. The group *must* include a Fighter, Cleric, Druid and Magic User. Unlike many standard dungeoneering games, there are no Middle-Earthly races to be chosen from. Typical to the genre, however, the player may select from a variety of faces to both represent each character and decorate the screen throughout the game; christen each character with a customized name and distribute points among the aptitudes of strength, wisdom, intelligence, dexterity and constitution. Also typical to the genre, each class, or "guild," member has his or her own forte, which determines the range of points which may be assigned to particular attributes.

To the relief of millions (or at least to this reviewer), even an apprentice Magic User possesses an auto-mapping spell. Once the spell is cast, a full-screen map of the dungeon area currently occupied is always available. Using this, players may reserve their efforts for the extremely demanding tasks ahead of them, rather than what many have come to regard as the old familiar graph-paper torture. Of course, cartographiles have the option of simply not casting the spell.

Moving around the dungeon is, as intimated in the introduction to this article, most easily accomplished by using the mouse. The keyboard is also available for this purpose, but recommended only for those with an unreasoning fear of mechanical rodents. On-screen icons allow movement, spell casting and recalling the auto-map. They also allow quick access to each character's inventory, as well as to the disk drive for saving or loading a game in progress. These icons have been intelligently placed ergonomically so that no player should suffer undue wrist injury while attempting to move the pointer at hyper-speed across the screen under the strain of battle.

As in *Dungeon Master*, players may use the pointer to reach into the graphic

Les Manley in: Lost in L.A.

"SHE STOOD NAKED,

HER WET BODY BATHED IN BEVERLY

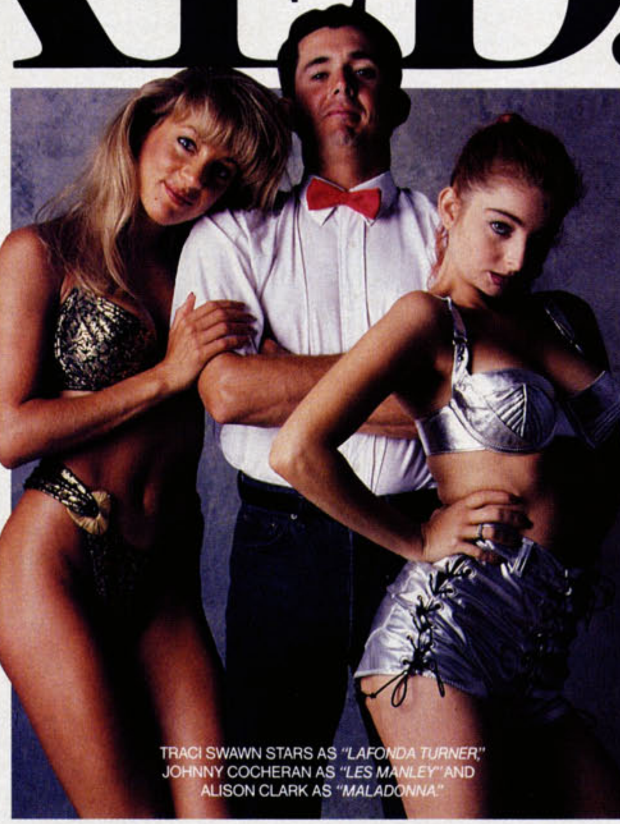
HILLS MOONLIGHT. THE STRANGER CREPT OUT FROM THE SHADOWS TOWARDS THE POOL. LIKE THE STARLETS WHO HAD VANISHED BEFORE HER, SHE WAS OBLIVIOUS TO HIS MENACING PRESENCE. HER SCREAM WAS NOT HEARD." THE HIPPEST STARS IN HOLLYWOOD ARE BEING KIDNAPPED. AND ONLY ONE MANLEY CAN SOLVE THE CRIME OF THE CENTURY. *LES MANLEY IN LOST IN L.A.*™ PLUNGES THE HERO OF *SEARCH FOR THE KING*™ INTO A MEGA-MYSTERY THAT SPANS ALL OF LA LA LAND. MEET GORGEOUS BABES, BODY BUILDERS, ROCK STARS, OUT-OF-WORK ACTORS—ALL FULLY ANIMATED AND DIGITIZED IN AWESOME 256 VGA CALIFORNIA COLOR. HERE'S A REALITY CHECK (LIST) ♦ LIVE VIDEO FOOTAGE OF REAL ACTORS AND ACTRESSES ♦ A POWERFUL PLOT AND DIALOGUE FROM A PROFESSIONAL SCREENWRITER ♦ REAL COOL CHARACTER SCALING WITH FULL ANIMATION ♦ ROCKIN' L.A. SOUNDTRACK WITH TOTAL MUSIC & SOUND BOARD SUPPORT ♦ REAL L.A. LOCATIONS—FROM HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD TO MULHOLLAND DRIVE MANSIONS ♦ REAL EASY 100% POINT & CLICK CONTROL ♦ SO IF YOU WANT A HOT STORYLINE, A SHOT TO SOLVE A MYSTERY AND THE GLAMOUR AND GLITZ OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, GET *LOST IN L.A.* LIKE IT'S TOTALLY REAL, DUDE. TO ORDER, VISIT YOUR FAVORITE RETAILER OR CALL 1-800-245-7744. ACCOLADE™











TRACI SWAWN STARS AS *"LAFONDA TURNER,"* JOHNNY COCHERAN AS *"LES MANLEY"* AND ALISON CLARK AS *"MALADONNA."*

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screen and pick up the many objects and place them into his inventory for later (ab)use. *Black Crypt* also contains an unending number of switches, buttons and levers which are also controlled by the mouse and pointer. Other functions that can be performed in rapid-fire fashion include: consuming food and magic drugs, trading inventory and preparing spells for casting.

Rapid movement is vital to success in *Crypt* because players will be up against some extremely agile creatures. Combat can begin at almost any time and generally involves one enemy per battle. At any level, however, enemies are generally more powerful than the adventure team, requiring a combination of muscle and magic to end the creature's existence. These attacks can become quite frenzied and may require a fighter to search in his inventory for alternate weapons or cause a spell caster to consult his book during the action. Also, during the battle, the graphic screen may contain a dropped dagger or a misdirected arrow which can be picked up and reused.

The ultimate goal in *Crypt* is probably the only mundane aspect of the entire exercise — there is a villain at the end of the dungeon and he needs to be put in his place (which in this case happens to be another dimension). Leading up to this, though, are some more interesting tasks which generally involve manipulating the endless switches, levers and pressure plates in order to find lost objects and restore order to different parts of the dungeon. There is no interaction with NPCs, and the various tasks are assigned by mysterious messages. One of the more intriguing aspects of the story is that several areas of the dungeon are meant to focus on the attributes of a particular character.

As far as the graphics are concerned, the phrase "You Are There!" *barely* does justice to the quality of the presentation. Perhaps, the game's designers managed to borrow some home movies belonging to a family of amorphous flesh-eaters? Creatures walk, crawl or undulate around corners and into view, dripping with whatever unpleasant material they enjoy dripping. Even the dungeon walls manage to set high new (low?) standards for unpleasantness, although this occasionally makes hidden buttons that much more difficult to spot. Much of the sinister detail comes from the use of the Amiga's 64 color/extra half-bright mode.

The sounds produced by the monsters are, likewise, not for the squeamish. Footsteps, growls and heavy breathing may warn the party that danger is approaching from a distance or, just as easily, frighten the player out of his or her CPU by suddenly emerging several inches away. The variety of noises these creatures produce can only be the product of a zoologist obsessed with gastroenterology.

If *The Black Crypt* were an actual locale rather than a computer game, new adventurers might notice a mangled, yet contented, combatant emerging from the dungeon. Said combatant would likely be this humble game critic, returning from a particularly enjoyable day at the office. One thing seems certain, *The Black Crypt* should not be spending much time in repose on retailer's shelves. It looks like it will be the kind of CRPG that will keep gamers from "resting in peace" until they finish it. **CGW**

The Games: Winter Challenge

"HE HATED THE AUSTRIANS.



THEY WERE FEARLESS, CUNNING AND FAST. FIVE GOLD MEDALS WERE ALREADY GOING BACK TO KITZBÜHEL. BUT HE VOWED TO DENY THEM A SIXTH. ON THE TRAM, HE TOLD THE REPORTERS. HE WOULD BE THE FASTEST MAN DOWN THE MOUNTAIN THIS DAY." INTENSE RIVALRY. GRUELING COMPETITION. WORLD CLASS SPEED. ALL PART OF THE GAMES: WINTER CHALLENGE.™ GO FOR THE BRONZE, SILVER OR GOLD AS YOU EXPERIENCE THE TOTAL RUSH OF COMPETING IN EIGHT CHALLENGING EVENTS AGAINST THE BEST ATHLETES ON EARTH. THE LIST OF FEATURES IS STRICTLY WORLD CLASS: • 256-COLOR VGA GRAPHICS • A STUNNING BLEND OF DIGITIZED, 3-D POLYGON-FILL AND BIT-MAPPED IMAGES • UNIQUE ATHLETE'S-EYE PERSPECTIVE COMBINED WITH SMOOTH, TRUE-TO-LIFE ANIMATION • 8 AUTHENTIC WINTER EVENTS • VCR-LIKE INSTANT REPLAY • TRAINING RUNS OR FULL MEDAL COMPETITION • DIGITIZED SOUND EFFECTS WITH FULL MUSIC & SOUND BOARD SUPPORT • AND IF YOU'RE TIRED OF ONE OR TWO-PLAYER GAMES, THIS ONE LETS YOU COMPETE AGAINST NINE PEOPLE – THE ULTIMATE PARTY GAME. • THE GAMES. FROM THE SHEER EXHILARATION OF THE DOWNHILL TO THE RAZORS EDGE OF THE LUGE, IT'S THE MOST REALISTIC SIMULATION OF ITS KIND. TO ORDER, VISIT YOUR FAVORITE RETAILER OR CALL 1-800-245-7744.

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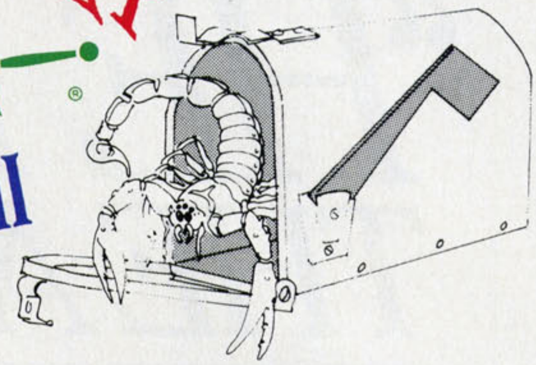




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Scorpion's Mail



Well, the old back room isn't as crowded as I thought it would be. Probably because all those releases that were supposed to be fighting for room in your Christmas stocking didn't show up. Oh, **Sierra** got a few goodies out the door and **New World** published *Might & Magic III*, but as I write this, there isn't much else on the market – no *Ultima VII* (It will be February, at least), no *Wizardry VII* (February, to be precise), no *Magic Candle II* ...you get the picture.

So, at least for those of us who prefer adventure/CRPG games, it's been a lean holiday season (sniff). That's been reflected in the mail bag, too. The last couple of months have been the lowest in letters received the whole year, at a time when it's often the heaviest. Ah well, less work for me! (grin)

Might & Magic III: By far, the majority of letters were about this one, which isn't surprising. Lots of questions about bugs from those who purchased the initial version, but those were covered pretty thoroughly last issue in my "*MM3* Tips" article. All I'll say about that is, if you run into any of them, send your disks back to New World for the update. It will save you a lot of frustration.

Speaking of frustration, if you're having a hard time with any of the puzzles, you may want to visit the pyramids (except the one on the Isle of Fire, which has no solutions). They have the answers to pretty much everything. The drawback is that you don't know what you'll hear until you hear it, so you may end up getting answers you didn't really want to know about. On the other hand, at least you can't become permanently stuck on any puzzle, either.

Eye of the Beholder: Here are some more clues to the hidden bonuses for those who like to do *everything*. On level 9, have ya ever wondered about that inscription on the wall about the key being on the other side? Bet you looked all around and couldn't find a key. That's because, strictly speaking, there isn't a key to be found. On the other hand, if you could figure out what to do at that place where the inscription is written, really throw yourself into the problem, as it were, you just might discover something. A little further down, on level 10, is a room with some niches and Mantis guards. You probably killed the guards and grabbed all the stuff (most of which isn't all that terrific). That's a start. Now you have to do something else. Don't be chicken!

Elvira: Down in the catacombs is one very nasty critter with a rock. You don't want to go up against this thing until you have the right weapon. That just happens to be the crusader sword. Nothing else will really do the job. Of course, *finding* the sword, that's another matter (heh). You'll have to go through the garden maze first, among other things.

Bane of the Cosmic Forge: Having dispensed with Bane and Rebecca, some people are stopped cold by the final grate that wants a password before it will open. This would be a good time to read that King's diary you've been lugging around for most of the game. What's that you say? It's in code? Well, shucks, here I thought you were a star adventurer and could figure that one out.

Spellcasting 201: Elevephants, dontcha just love 'em? No? Aww, too bad. Maybe that's because they're so big and mean-tempered. Oh, you got all that taken care of and now you want to slip the thing out of the frat house. Let's face it, elevephants weren't born to be stealthy. Tip-toeing through the tulips isn't exactly their forte. So, you just better forget about going through the front door and look for another way out.

Pools of Darkness: Like most gold box productions, *Pools* is pretty straightforward, except when it comes to Moander's Heart. This area is giving a lot of people some fits. That's mostly because of the Watcher. She's never in the same place twice, so you have to run around a lot to find her. *And* you have to find her several times. She's the key to the solution of this entire area, so keep looking. Without her help, you'll never finish this segment.

King's Quest V: Some folks are in too much of a hurry to get past the snake. Relax a little. Do everything in and around the town first. If you try going into the mountains with some things left undone, you either won't get very far, or you'll find yourself in a no-win situation. After a certain point, there's no turning back. By the way, don't eat the pie! It has a much more important purpose than filling your tummy.

Timequest: The convolutions of this one are causing headaches in a few people. This is not surprising, the way various time periods link to each other. Keep in mind that King Tut/Charlemagne/Napoleon need to be done pretty much together, as the last sequence in the game. The thread begins with Charlemagne (or, more properly, his crown), although Peking 1940 has to be done before you can start up this route. Get everything else finished first, then work on this chain, the most complicated in the game.

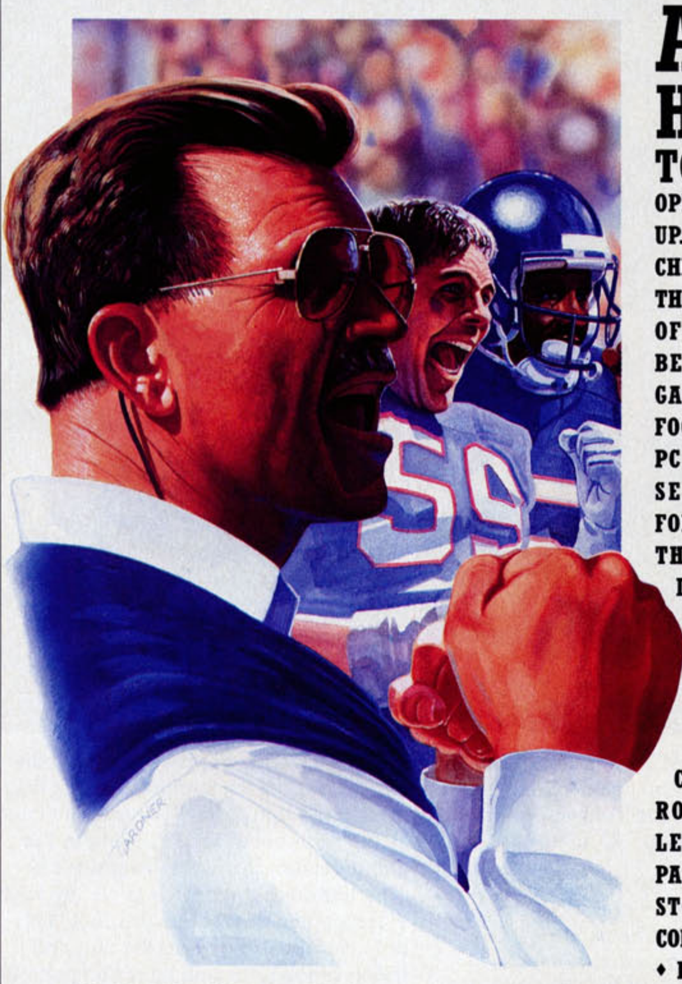
That's about it for this look into the mailbag. Remember, if you need help with an adventure game, you can reach me in the following ways:

On Delphi: Visit the GameSIG (under the Groups & Clubs menu). On GEnie: Stop by the Games Round Table (type: Scorpia to reach the Games RT). By US Mail (enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you live in the United States): Scorpia, P.O. Box 338, Gracie Station, New York, NY 10028.

Until next time, happy adventuring! **CGW**

Mike Ditka Ultimate Football

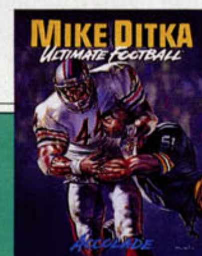
"DITKA WAS OUT TO KICK BUTT



AND TAKE NAMES.

HE DIDN'T JUST WANT TO WIN. HE WANTED TO POUND HIS

OPPONENT INTO SUBMISSION. DON'T HOLD BACK. NEVER EASE UP. THAT'S HOW HE PLAYED. THAT'S HOW HE COACHES HIS CHICAGO BEARS.®" NOTHING LESS THAN THE ULTIMATE. THAT'S THE PHILOSOPHY OF MIKE DITKA. THAT'S THE SECRET BEHIND HIS NEW FOOTBALL GAME. MIKE DITKA ULTIMATE FOOTBALL,™ IS THE ONLY NEW PC FOOTBALL GAME OUT THIS SEASON. AND POUND(ING) FOR POUND(ING) IT BEATS UP THE COMPETITION. BUT HEY, DON'T TAKE OUR WORD FOR IT. CHECK OUT THE STATS FOR YOURSELF. ♦ BIG AND BOLD 256 COLOR VGA GRAPHICS ♦ STUNNING PLAYER ANIMATION ♦ 28 PRO TEAMS TO CHOOSE FROM ♦ 32-MAN ROSTERS; VARIABLE SKILL LEVELS; SUBSTITUTIONS ♦ 4 PASSING MODES: REAL TIME OR STOP ACTION, WITH USER OR COMPUTER ASSISTED RECEIVERS ♦ EAR POUNDING DIGITIZED SPEECH AND SOUND EFFECTS ♦ PRACTICE MODE FOR ALL PLAYS, KICKOFF RETURNS, FIELD GOALS ♦ BOOM FIELD GOALS WITH DITKA'S EXCLUSIVE POWER BAR™ KICKING GAME. HEAR THE CALLS OF REFEREE JIM TUNNEY, A 31 YEAR VETERAN OF THE NFL WARS. PICK APART YOUR OPPONENT WITH PLAYS YOU DESIGN OR CALL ON THE 132-PLAY PLAYBOOK. WATCH INSTANT REPLAYS FROM *FOUR* DIFFERENT ANGLES. BOTTOM LINE? DITKA DELIVERS SUPERIOR GRAPHICS, GAMEPLAY AND REALISM. TRULY THE ULTIMATE BLEND OF ACTION, STRATEGY AND TOTAL CONTROL. TO ORDER, VISIT YOUR LOCAL RETAILER OR CALL 1-800-245-7744. ACCOLADE™









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Sneak Previews are not designed to be reviews. They are feature articles based on "works in progress" that CGW's editors have deemed worthy of early coverage. These articles are not intended to provide the "final word" on a product, since we expect to publish appropriate review coverage when the game is completely finished. Sneak Previews are designed to inform our readers about upcoming games and generate excitement about the "state of the art" of computer game design in general.

"If Ever, Oh Ever

A Sneak Preview

by Alan



If a tree falls in the forest while playing *Wizardry*, the players will now be able to hear it. While the great outdoors have long been a staple of role-playing fare among other top CRPG games, *Wizardry* has too long been bound up in dungeon delving. As one of their many ways of "branching out," **Sir-Tech Software** and programmer/designer David W. Bradley have embraced the new world created in *Wizardry VI: The Bane of the Cosmic Forge* (*Bane*) and built many further enhancements to the *Wizardry* gaming system upon that familiar foundation.

Wizardry VII: Crusaders of the Dark Savant is a sequel that begins with an intrepid group of the traditional six heroes setting off into the woods and pondering the destiny of humanity (typical for a Sunday afternoon stroll, right?). The beginning depends on how events left off in *Bane*, as characters can be transferred over from that game. Yes, unlike CRPGs that might simply boast of multiple endings, *Dark Savant* has multiple *beginnings*. There were three possible endings in *Wizardry VI*, so the new *Wizardry VII* will have four possible beginnings; one commensurate with each *Bane* ending (each enjoying its own unique "historical" write-up in the *Playmaster's Compendium*) and one for completely new characters rolled up from scratch or transferred parties who didn't complete *Bane*. The astute reader is correct – players do *not* need to possess *Wizardry VI* to enjoy *Wizardry VII*. In fact, three skill levels are built into the game's AI in order to challenge players of every experience level evenly.

"How Would You Like It If Someone Picked Apples Off You?!"

So, the story begins in the woods, but the characters are not necessarily out on a limb. With no arcade sequences, *Wizardry* remains a role-playing series for player who like to ponder their decisions. While doing so, they're certain to notice that this latest installment of the series has used a full 256-color VGA palette for its graphics (16-color EGA is also planned for support).

What was that noise? Ah, birds chirping... Well, that's just part of the complete sound support that helps bring state-of-the-art CRPGs closer to that *personal* dimension so long enjoyed by "People & Paper" role-playing games. Of course, "People & Paper" RPGs seldom enjoy the kinds of cinematic background music and sound effects of a quality computer game like *Dark Savant*, so score one for the PC owners.

Poppies

While the great outdoors does not display graphics which are as mesmerizing as those in a few other CRPGs, they are certainly impressive when one considers that they are *Wizardry*'s first foray out of doors. The sun and moon rise and set, the sky lightens and darkens and players should *not* march straight into the field of poppies right away! (Grin.) One interesting note about time passing in the alpha version this writer examined is that, although the design is clearly such that sleeping characters are "out" for only eight hours of rest, the sun and moon manage to pull off a complete 24-hour sequence of rising and setting. Perhaps the days are only eight hours long on this new planet?

Follow the Yellow Brick Road

"The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep..."
– Robert Frost, "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening"

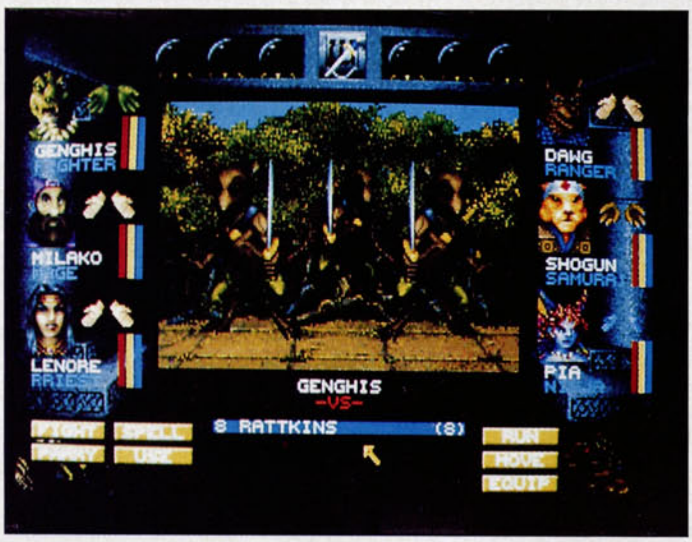
So where do the woods take our heroes? To the path, of course, which

a Wiz There Was"

of Wizardry VII

Emrich





leads to a road, which goes to a way, which ends at a gate where stands "New City." New City, by the way, is a complete misnomer, but that is unimportant here. The fact that there is a gate on the opposite end of town leading through *more* forests (boy, give the designer a tree and he builds huge forests!) to... well, I digress.

Players, however, will be *less* likely to digress in *Wizardry VII* (than in previous games in the series), because *Dark Savant* is the first of the series to use the ever-popular automapping feature. While it is not planned to show the entire level in which the party resides, the automapping feature will show several squares in all directions. Some magic, however, is required before the mapping becomes "auto," and players will still want to keep their own hand-drawn "strategic"-level maps with notes and asides doodled in the margins.

"Ignore That Man Behind the Curtain"

What players won't notice right away are many extras in this latest *Wizardry* installment. The spell system has been expanded, as has the combat system. The combat system, in fact, is not only more artful in that sounds occur and objects are hurled from a first-person ("first-party?") perspective (the whooshing daggers are particularly good), but also in the details that make up each round of combat. Armor classes are weighted by body location, penetration considerations, combat skills, etc., but players will feel the additional realism even if they'll never see every formula used to resolve battles. In the alpha version examined, all monsters died, literally, in a mini-fireball with a satisfying "bang." Presumably, each was naught but a maniacal pinata stuffed with firecrackers, but we hope there will be more evidence of their passing in the final version.

"If I Were King of the Forest..."

Two things take on a particularly fragrant air in *Wizardry VII*. This can best be summed up as "Mice & Dice." This previewer, for one, enjoys a good mouse interface, and *Crusaders of the Dark Savant* certainly has that. Except for typing in occasional bits of conversation (and the look-up word from the manual for the copy protection — no more black-on-red non-repro paper), a player can "click back" and enjoy the game. The keyboard can still be used, but those preferring to have their left hand working a soda or some chips will be very pleased.

Dice are, indisputably, the little plastic building blocks of a role-playing game experience. Role-playing gamers roll dice for everything: to hit, to save, to detect, to unlock, to calculate pi, etc. Like *Bane*, *Savant* kept the dice, and literally "rolls" them, just as a real, live dungeon master would, for every little occasion. Truly, these games have enhanced the entire genre of CRPGs with their thorough use of standard "People & Paper" RPG modifiers, calculations and combat options. Best of all, the computer "dungeon master" (i.e., the program) even gladly lets players attempt some very non-structured activities and, if someone has the right statistics for the job, it's done!

"I Don't Think We're in Kansas Anymore"

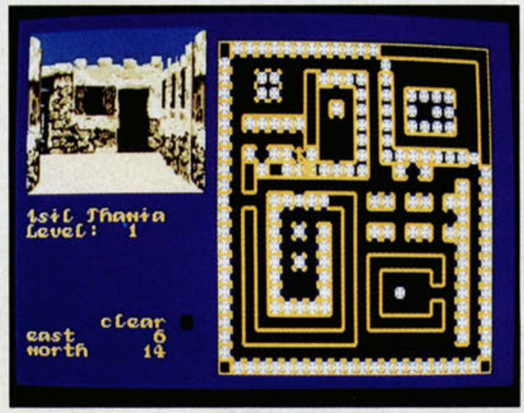
Oh, sure, Sir-Tech could have taken the easy road and just added some more weapons, monsters, skills, spells and items (they did, by the way) to a new set of maps (er, they did that, *too*, by the way) and called it *Wizardry VII* knowing that their installed base of *Wizardry* fans would make the game a fine-selling hit without requiring too much extra effort on their part. Fortunately, Sir-Tech chose to take the high road and push the limits of their most ambitious game to date, *Bane of the Cosmic Forge*. In the beginning (which, for the computer gaming hobby, is pretty much the early 1980s), *Wizardry: Proving Grounds of the Mad Overlord* **was** computer fantasy role-playing. Over the years it lost its position of leadership as other fantasy CRPG epics came into vogue. With *Wizardry: Crusaders of the Dark Savant*, Sir-Tech is making an important stride toward the position of "the standard by which other CRPGs are measured." While still playing "catch up" in several areas, the progress is marked, and the future for the *Dark Savant* appears very bright indeed. **CGW**

Scorpion's View

Let's Plot and Role: Interplay's Bard's Tale Construction Set

as told by Scorpia





Scorpia is an experienced and respected adventure game expert. CGW is pleased to be able to provide this forum for her distinctive and often controversial perspective.

The *Bard's Tale Construction Set* (*BTCS*) from **Interplay** is for those who can't get enough of their favorite series, are tired of waiting for the next professional *Bard's Tale* (how long has **EA** been talking about *Bard's Tale IV*?) or just want to try their hands at making a CRPG of their own.

Make no mistake about it: you can create a fully functioning *Bard's Tale* scenario with this package. In addition, you can make copies of your pride and joy for friends to play and they won't need *BTCS* to run it — the finished product is a stand-alone game anybody can run.

Since you have almost complete control over the entire creation process, the scenario can be tailored to suit your own particular taste — fewer monsters and more puzzles, a hack'n'slash saturnalia or almost anything in between.

Beginning at the main menu, you choose which aspect to work on. There are five separate editors, one each for items, monsters, spells, maps and specials. There is also a set of utilities for saving your creations, testing your dungeons and compiling the various files into a playable game.

Editing most of the parts is a simple process. Suppose you're working on items. You bring up the item editor and choose create a new item. You give it a name (Death Axe, for instance), a type (hand weapon), decide on which classes can use it (a particular class, a bunch of classes or everyone), how much damage it does, whether it has a special effect (such as critical hit), what the chance of the special effect is (anywhere from 0-100% of the time), what spell (if any) it can cast, how many times the spell can be cast and how much it would cost to buy the item (if it were available for sale).

Doing a monster is pretty much the same. You decide on its name, level, hit points, damage, number of attacks, magic resistance, starting distance from the party, maximum number that can appear at one time, special attacks (if any, such as paralysis), spells (if any) that it can cast and even the type of action it will perform each round. You also choose the picture that's displayed when the party encounters it in the dungeon.

Spells are a little trickier to design. Here you have to decide on what a spell does, which mage class can use it, how long it lasts, what level it is, how much power it requires, how far out from the party it will work, what target(s) it will affect (one critter, a group of critters or all groups) and the four-letter code used by the mage when casting the spell.

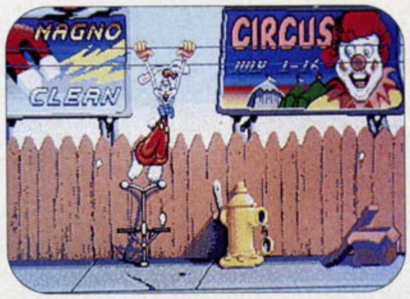
Maps are a bit easier. First you decide if you want to build a town, dungeon or outdoors. Then you get a blank 22 x 22 grid to work with, which appears on the right side of the screen. On the left is a counter which tracks your location in east-north (X,Y) coordinates, and gives you a view of what the location looks like, depending on which way the cursor is facing at the moment.

You move the cursor around the map, putting up walls, doors, secret doors, ruins (outdoors only) and specials. These can go anywhere on the map, although only one type of thing can be in any one location. You can't, for example, put a special on top of a door, only in front of or behind it.

Specials are really the heart of the game. This is where you create nasty traps, pose riddles, initiate quests, provide information, and pretty much set up almost any particular event, or combination of events, that you want. Up to thirty different specials are allowed on a map, but you can have as many of those thirty as you desire.

There are forty-nine special situations, plus another seventeen conditionals. The situations are straightforward actions, activated when you step on the square. These can be anything from darkness zones to anti-magic zones to spell renewal zones to damage zones to monster encounters, and many others besides.





After you've been clobbered by an ironing board, conked on the head by a rake, run over by a car, burned on a stove-top, flushed down a toilet and squeezed through a wringer, you'll find it's not easy being Roger Rabbit.

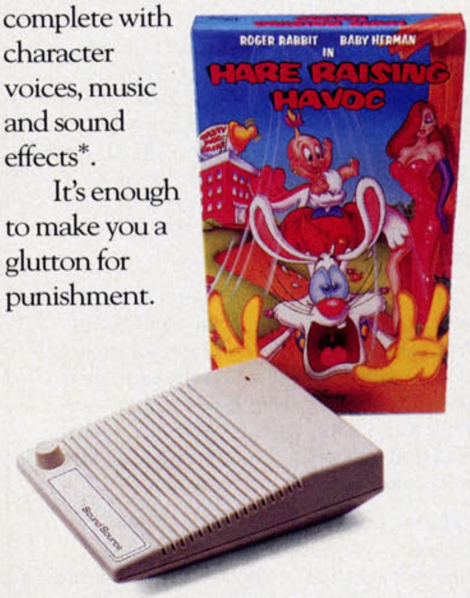
If you're lucky, you'll find Baby Herman before his mom returns, in *Hare Raising Havoc*, the first interactive cartoon.

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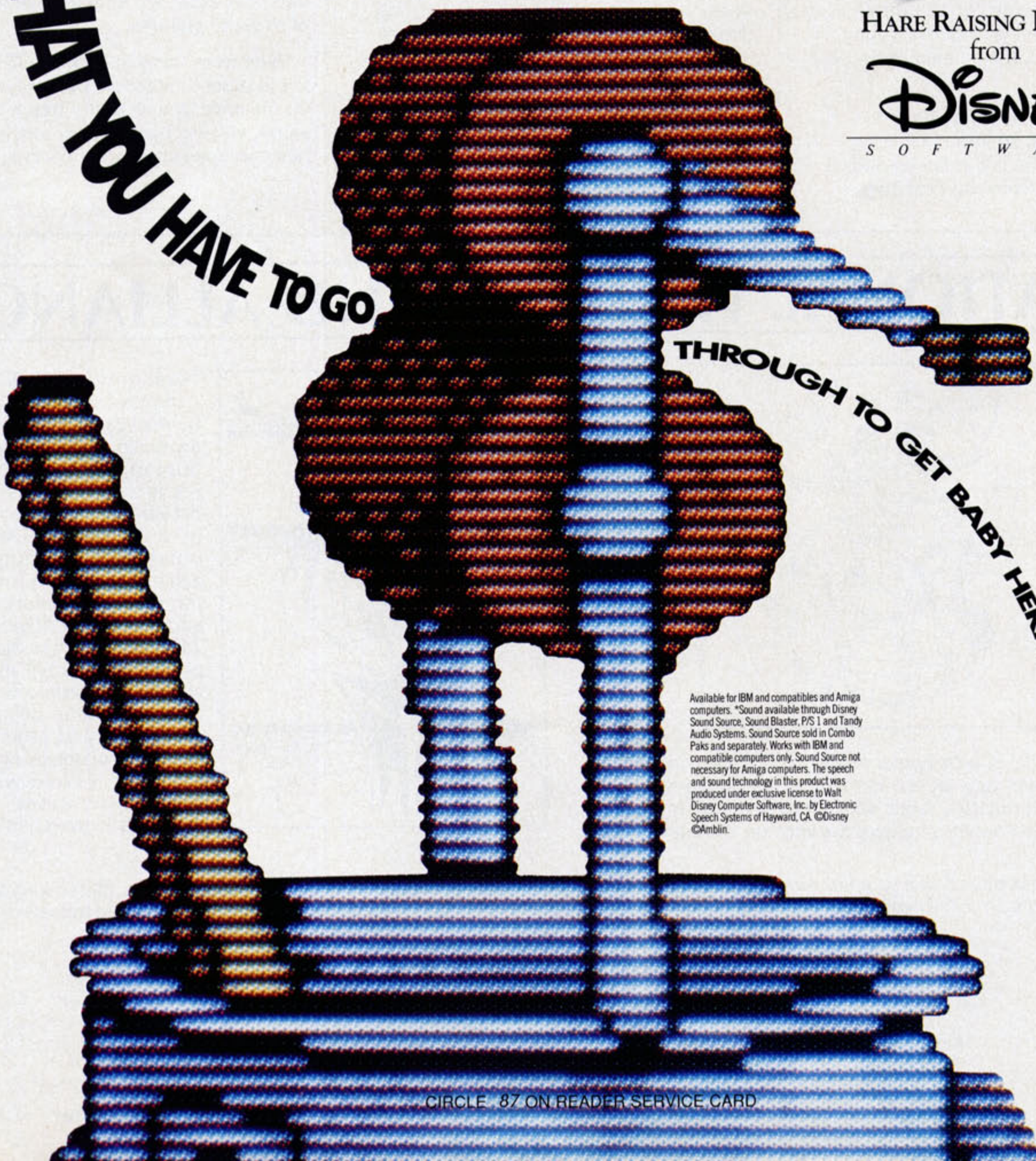
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CIRCLE 87 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Conditionals check for a specific circumstance before activating. They are set up in the form "If-Then-Else." For instance, "IF everyone is carrying blue marker THEN teleport to 15,6 ELSE nothing." This one is pretty obvious: all characters must have a blue marker in their inventories for the party to be sent to the particular location.

While there are only seventeen conditionals, they can be combined with the forty-nine "regulars" to create some pretty sophisticated effects. You can have a whole string of events occur in one location, since each special has twenty lines, and you can set up both straight actions and conditionals in one special.

Before putting the entire scenario together, you test it out, one level at a time. For testing purposes, there is a pre-created party that you can run through the maps to be certain that everything works as it should, the balance is proper, etc.

This party starts with nothing in the way of equipment, so if the first thing you're checking out is a monster-riddled crypt, you should consider dropping a temporary Garth's on the map. Otherwise, the party isn't going to last too long. (I discovered this the hard way, heh.)

The system supports CGA(!), EGA, VGA and Tandy graphics. Music (which is heard only when a bard plays a tune) can come through Sound Blaster, Sound Blaster Pro, Pro Audio Spectrum, Roland/LAPC, Adlib or Tandy. Oddly, the sound effects can only come through Tandy or the internal PC speaker. Since there aren't that many effects, it's a little surprising they aren't done with a sound card.

For all the ease of use and power that *BTCS* provides, there is still a lot of hard work involved. Even the simplest dungeon requires a great deal of forethought and planning, not to mention testing. While you can jump in and start building dungeon levels and working up neat-o monsters with no preparation, you're likely to run into problems before long. To really use this package properly, and create good scenarios, there's no way around it — you have to sit down and do it on paper first.

The budding designer will also find some aspects of *BTCS* that are, perhaps, a bit frustrating. One of these is the lack of graphics. There isn't much to work with in that respect. Altogether, there are only 45 different pictures you can use, and not all of them are monsters. Some are interiors, such as Garth's, the Review Board, a tavern, an empty room, etc. Others are used to represent your party.

What's left is only a relative handful for depicting the critters and NPCs. These rather strict limitations make it difficult to create your own art for the game. Considering the highly graphic nature of the *Bard's Tale* series, it's both surprising and disappointing that **Interplay** chose to be so stringent in their requirements. This is particularly so since they are supporting only one brand of paint program and have provided only a small number of in-game pictures.

Aside from the graphics, *BTCS* has some other limitations. Damage spells, for instance, are all pretty much the same, varying only by how much they hurt the opposition and how long they

last. Of course, even with that, some pretty mean effects are possible.

You could start with a first level Flame Dart that hits for 1d6 damage, then to a second level Flame Bolt that does 2d6, working your way up to a Conflagration spell that does 10d6 every round to all monster groups (ouch!).

The thing is, they all do the same type of damage, and it doesn't matter if you call it Flame Dart or Snowball or Sheepskin. Further, spell damage is defined by a set number of dice (2d6, 6d10, etc) rather than level of the spellcaster. So, you end up having to create a fair number of damage spells, just to keep the mages on a par with the monsters.

Also, spells are restricted by class, and no sharing is possible. If you wanted, for instance, both a Conjurer and a Magician to have a Cure Poison spell, you'd have to create two of them, one for each class. This makes for a lot of unnecessary duplication.

There is also little sharing of specials. Except for the few stock specials such as darkness, spinners, etc., the ones you create are all tied to a particular map. Thus, if you create a special that has both darkness and silence for Crypt Level 1, it can be used only there. If you want it on Crypt Level 2 as well, you have to make it up again for that map.

The Utilities section allows you to print out the spells, but not items or monsters. This is an amazing oversight, since the only way to view these things otherwise is by looking on-screen. If you have many items and/or monsters in your game, paging through the display becomes a bit much, and it's all too easy to lose track of things.

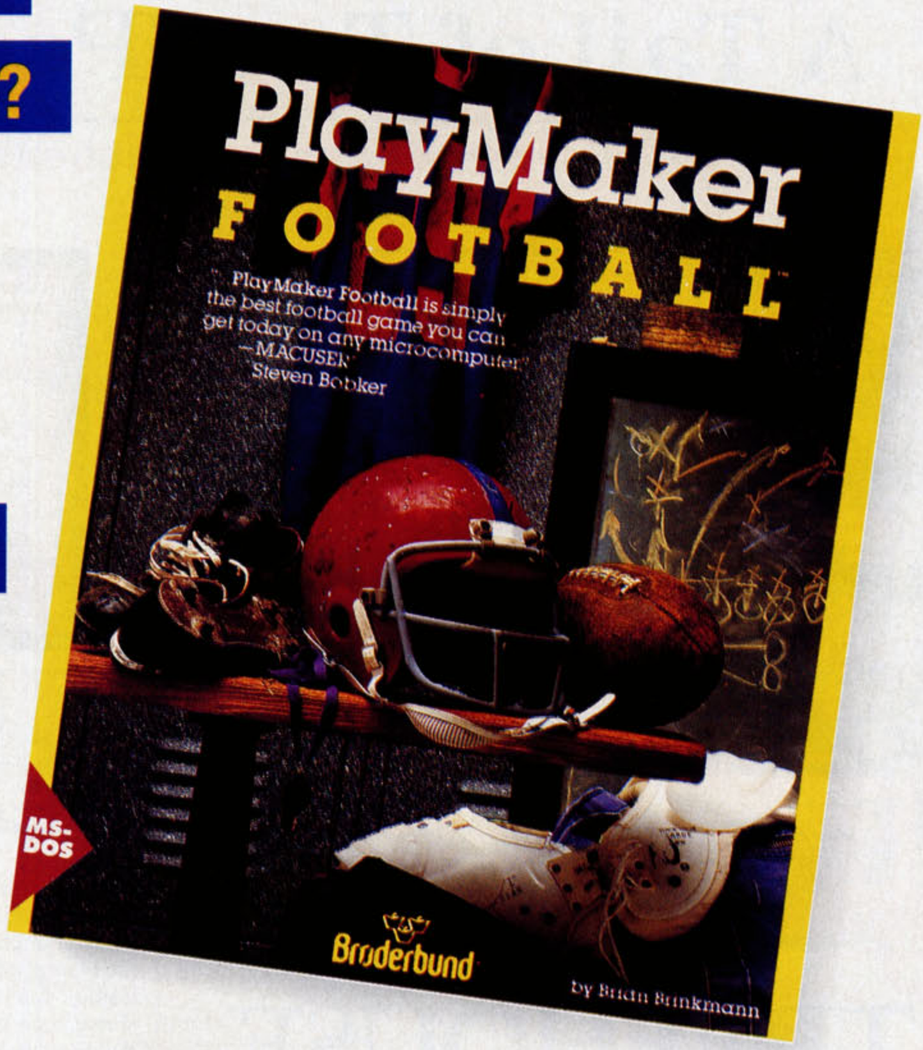
One very surprising omission is the lack of any way of personalizing your completed scenario. You can't put either your name or the name of your game into it anywhere on the screen. It would have been better, as well as much more satisfying, for **Interplay** to have allowed some space on the title screen for "The City Of Doom by Joe Smith," or something similar. Not being able to do this takes away some of the fun of making your own dungeon game.

The manual is somewhat skimpy in the details it provides. Most of the editors are covered in no more than a page or so. Few examples are provided for creating specials and some of the specials themselves could use more informative descriptions. As specials are the most complicated portion of the scenario, more in-depth material should have been given on them. All the information on graphic requirements for your own art is not in the manual but in the README file on disk, something that many people don't read, even though they should. I heartily recommend printing this, as it contains important information and some errata to the manual.

While *BTCS* is definitely rough around the edges and somewhat lacking in polish, it is still a good dungeon editor. You can, with time and effort, create a very acceptable game, and learn something about the elements of good dungeon design. Anyone who has ever seriously considered designing his or her own CRPG (or maybe even anyone who has ever critiqued a CRPG design) should give this one a look. **CGW**

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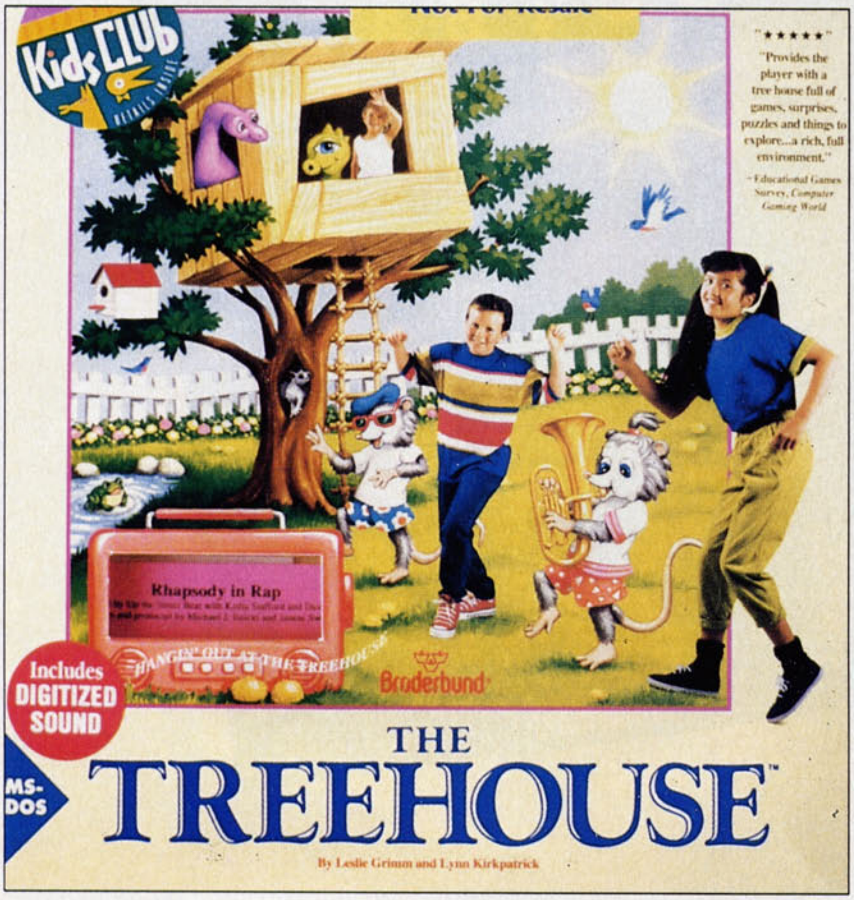
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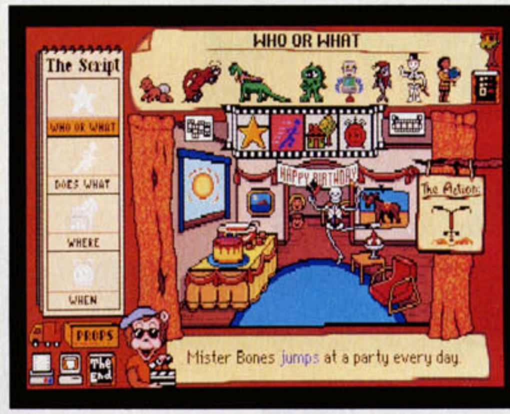
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A Tail of Two 'Possums

Broderbund's The Treehouse

by Caitlin Ackelson





TITLE:	The Treehouse
SYSTEM:	IBM
PRICE:	$59.95
PROTECTION:	Document Look-Up
DESIGNERS:	Leslie Grimm and Lynn Kirkpatrick
PUBLISHER:	Broderbund Novato, CA

When players, aged six to 10, climb up into *The Treehouse* by **Broderbund**, they enter a player-driven, interactive world of exploration, learning, games, puzzles and surprises. Like its predecessor, *The Playroom*, *The Treehouse* is a cozy place full of neat stuff where kids can play on their own or with another. As one of the "Awesome 'Possums" (the male or female on-screen character), players point-and-click their way through such topics as music, math, language and science. Rather than the dry, predictable treatment that was the norm in educational software in years past, i.e. "computer flash cards," this software package presents its subjects with subtlety and originality, sparkle and humor.

Inside *The Treehouse*, players can choose to get involved in a game, eat a piece of fruit, just look out the window (at the variety of goings-on there) or climb down the tree and see what's happening outside.

Chalk it up to Learning

In the main room of the treehouse, there is a wide assortment of things to do. Players can play a game, use the mouse to "draw" on a chalkboard with colored chalk, watch as a mother bird feeds a worm to her nest full of chirping babies, look through a telescope (at several different views), check for a "this date in history" fun fact, make the clouds change their shape, look at the clock and see the "real-life" accurate time, have a snack or take a nap.

Outside, the player's 'possum can climb down the rope ladder, peek in at some squirrels storing nuts for the winter or just explore the back yard.

Games 'Possums Play

One area that *The Treehouse* addresses with especial thoroughness is music. The software accomplishes this through both its "Musical Keys" and "Musical Maze" games. The former allows players to play or listen to any of 24 familiar tunes (everything from nursery rhymes to short pieces of classical music) on a variety of instruments from strings, woodwinds or brass to animal sounds or tissue paper and comb. (For example, "Pop goes the weasel" on the oboe or a Bach minuet on the electric guitar.) Or kids can make up their own songs and vary the notes, instrument used, tempo, note duration, sharps and flats — the works. When composing, players can work by clicking on the on-screen piano keyboard or directly on a musical staff. Once a piece has been written, the sheet music can then be printed for playing on "real" instruments — ideal for anyone taking music lessons. If a sound card is not used, notes will sound as tones only, rather than sounding like specific instruments..

The "Musical Maze" game allows players to test their knowledge of musical notes, instruments and songs. There is a

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All in all, the Sound Blaster Pro is chock-full of new features, yet it's fully compatible with its younger brother."

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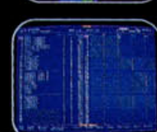
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name-that-tune aspect to the game as well as a test of recognition of note patterns, tone and duration. This kind of practice and repetition is excellent for reinforcing music concepts.

Go Math Racer, Go

The Road Rally game can be played with either money or chips. In this *Candyland*ish exercise, players roll the on-screen dice and use math and counting skills to decide how far to move their car. For instance, which is more: one dime and one penny or one nickel and four pennies? Players make their choices and advance accordingly. They may play against a computer opponent or another human player. The first player to reach his or her goal wins the race and takes a prize back to the treehouse.

Lights, Camera, Interaction

In Treehouse Theater, players act as writer and director of a silly production of their own play. They choose the who, what, where and when elements necessary to create a story and then, see it acted out on stage. This game allows players to practice forming complete sentences that are grammatically correct and also very funny, such as "The baby juggles at the beach every day" or "My favorite teacher eats pickles on the moon during an eclipse." Props can even be added to the scene, according to its setting. So, at the beach, a star fish, a pail and shovel and a beach ball are provided. For the setting entitled "The middle of nowhere," props like a rainbow, a planet and a giant eyeball are available. The designers have really let their imaginations run wild here and the results are hilarious.

Help! The Back Yard is Full of Invertebrates!

The "Backyard Zoo" games teach players about different groups of familiar animals and how they are classified according to their traits. In "Animal Album," players choose animals of differing descriptions (has a backbone, is cold-blooded, has wings, has two legs, breathes with lungs, eats plants and animals, etc.) and places them in an outdoor scene to create a picture. So, under the heading "has a backbone" are the groups mammals, birds, fish and reptiles. Then under "mammals," are examples like cottontail rabbit, dog, human, squirrel and chipmunk (pretty distinguished company, huh?). Players can then click on the squirrel and place it in the picture so it is sitting in a tree. (This reviewer ended up with a garden full of ladybugs and a serious overpopulation of hummingbirds.)

In "Guess My Animal," players are given clues about a specific animal's traits and behavior (has four legs, is active during the day, has no wings) and guess, from a sample of possible choices, what animal it might be. In this way, players simultaneously learn about the animal kingdom and practice the use of deductive reasoning.

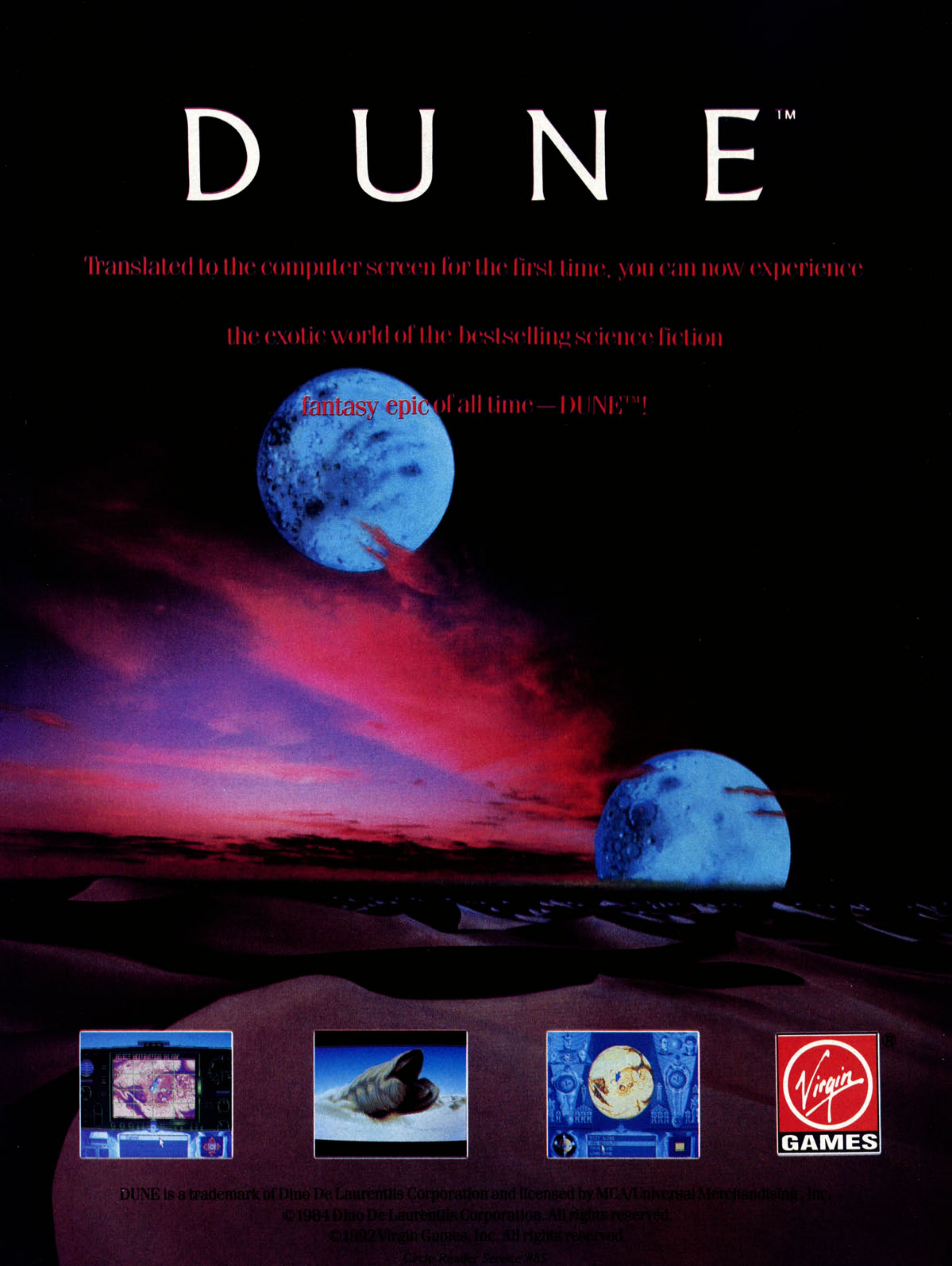
A Smart Game for Smart Alecks

If "real live" players are anything like this reviewer, the first thing they want to do with a game is mess around with it — do stuff they're not supposed to do — and see if they can get it to make a mistake or reveal some kind of flaw. *The Treehouse* is up to the test. Players can try anything; they can throw apples out the window and see what happens. (Look down on the ground and there it is: apple mush! Then, ants come along to eat the mush.) If they try throwing the teddy bear into the pond outside, the bear plops into the water. Then, a fish surfaces and spews it right back on shore with a splash. Can it be possible that the designers were *expecting* players to throw the teddy bear into the fish pond? Apparently so. They seem to have been ready for anything. Thoroughness like that does not go unappreciated by this reviewer; this software is well thought-out and carefully implemented. *The Treehouse* is an involving, engrossing piece of work. It is the kind of game kids can lose themselves in for hours on end. This reviewer predicts that more than one parental cry of "Come in to dinner!" will receive a reply of "I'll be there in a minute...." Avoid arguments before they start: just go into the computer room, pick them up bodily and carry them into the dining room.

'Possumtainment

The Treehouse can be played with a mouse or a keyboard, but a mouse is highly recommended. The documentation is clear and easy to understand. It should be gone over by parents and kids together at first. Then, once kids get the hang of the game's interface, they should need little help. No reading skills are necessary in order to play the game. Frankly, although it is recommended especially for ages six to 10, younger children who have been exposed to computer games as well as older players (particularly those with an interest in music) may be equally interested.

The Treehouse comes with a kids' guide and song book full of supplementary information and ideas for things to do like "Science in the backyard" and "Homemade instruments." There is even a cassette tape of that toe-tapping *Treehouse* theme for kids' listening and dancing pleasure. The designers have created a full package of fun here that should serve as a valuable source of education and entertainment. **cgw**


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PRICE:	$49.99
PROTECTION:	Document Check
DESIGNER:	Synergistic Software Robert Clardy, Michael Branham and Robert Mendel
PUBLISHER:	Virgin Games Irvine, CA

Virgin Games' Conan the Cimmerian

by Charles Ardai



The principle behind games based on licensed characters such as Conan is that they give players a chance to inhabit the world and the life of those characters. So, for instance, *Batman* lets players "be" Batman, with all his skills, gadgets and enemies, just as *Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis* allows players to "become" Steven Spielberg's famous archaeologist. Interestingly enough, *Conan the Cimmerian* is unusual in that Conan starts the game not as the proficient, sword-wielding barbarian of novel, comic book and movie renown, but as a peaceful blacksmith living in domestic tranquility with his wife. This is *not* the Conan one is accustomed to seeing — and though that Conan develops in due course, it is only with the player's assistance that he does so. This betrays the designers' interest in doing something slightly different with the material than has been done until now.

The game tells a lengthy origin story in an animated sequence at the start of the game. Conan and his wife are leading an innocent existence, he at the forge, she doing *something* on the ground. (It looks as though she is doing the laundry, but since Mrs. Conan wears the skimpiest of brass g-strings and her husband a loincloth, there would not seem to be much laundry to do.)

Suddenly, a band of marauders descends upon the village! One of them shoots lightning bolts at Mrs. Conan, leaving her sprawled, dead, on the ground. Another lays Conan out flat with a blow from his mace. When Conan recovers and finds the town in ruins, he resolves to carry out a vendetta against the man responsible for the destruction of all he held dear: Thoth Amon. Ominous drum roll, please.

So, as astute readers have already surmised, one spends the first half of the game bringing Conan up to speed. This involves finding a mentor to hone Conan's combat skills, tracking down weapons and magic items suitable to his new life as a mercenary and amassing forces to lead against the nefarious Thoth Amon (James Earl Jones, in the movie). The second half of the game consists of a collection of quests on which Conan is sent from the central city of Shadizar. Once Conan has completed these quests, he is ready to face Thoth Amon himself in a climactic showdown.

The use of a big chunk of the game for "creating" Conan is an interesting device. It permits a certain amount of plot and character development in what might otherwise be a static series of mini-adventures. Granted that much of this development will be familiar to players from Conan's previous incarnations; but if it is familiar, at least it is also faithful, visually and in spirit, to its sources.

Conan the Geographer

Conan takes place across the entire continent of Hyborea. A world map gives an overview of the quest sites; as one progresses in the game, the map fills in with new locations. Thoth Amon's city, Tarantia, is on the map from the start, but cannot be entered until the end of the game. This provides a nice goad for the player and a constant reminder of the overriding mission that ties all of Conan's disparate agendas together.

Actual gameplay takes place both on *Ultima*-style street and wilderness maps and on *Karateka*-style combat and interaction screens. A very basic menu of commands is available at each of these levels, as well as a point-and-click interface that calls up unique sub-menus for different types of interactions.

The choices available in any encounter are extremely limited. The only permanent commands are Inventory, Status and the generic "Action." Most sub-menus have only two or three choices (Converse/Attack/Done, Yes/No), and combat consists of the following commands: Left, Right and Attack.

By the end, one can use a grand total of three different attacks

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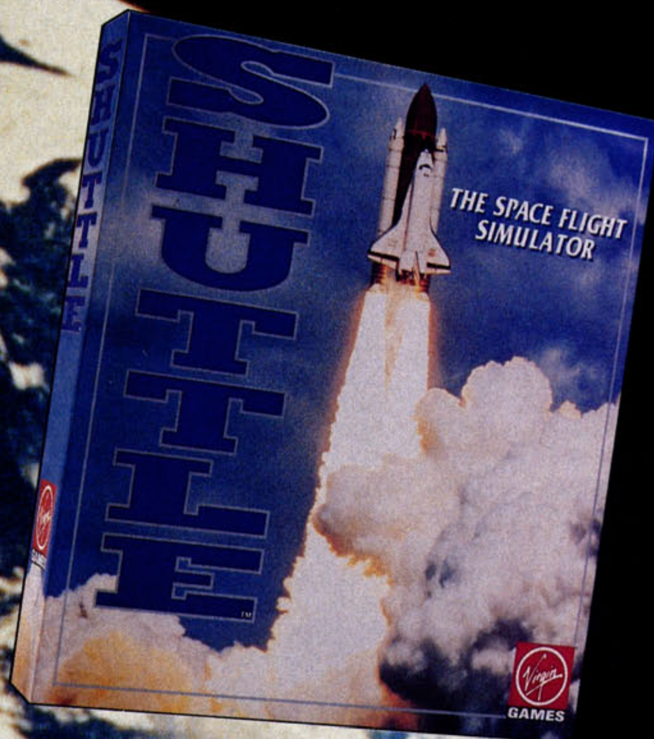
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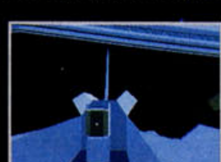
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— Swing, Thrust and Chop — but Conan starts the game only able to Swing. (Stop smirking.)

The result is a game caught somewhere in the middle between action and role-playing. It is perhaps the most rudimentary role-playing game ever made, cutting down to the bare bones the complexities of a *Might and Magic* or an *Ultima*. (There are magic items, but no spells; there are a variety of weapons, but most seem to be swords.) On the other hand, *Conan* clearly is not primarily an action game, for two reasons: first, because the game has plenty of CRPG-style puzzles to solve, some of which are quite ingenious (how to kill an undead king who cannot be harmed by Conan's weapons, for instance), and second, because the action is not very good.

In fact, the game's major drawback is not its lack of complexity in the role-playing area — *Conan* is not a difficult game (it is, simply put, "fun"), but features endless, repetitive and poorly animated action sequences that detract from the overall entertainment value. Unfortunately, every street and path in the game teems with enemies who will attack Conan at the drop of a helm. Then, each such encounter is played out as a side-view struggle, with Conan and his foe raining blows on each other with all their might. The characters are well-drawn, but since they are so large (usually seen as a "plus" in the videogame world), there is little room for maneuvering.

As combat continues, "life-meters" at the base of the screen indicate each character's declining stamina in conventional arcade-game fashion. Thus, combat tends to be a matter of finding an attack that will penetrate a given character's defenses ("Thrust" seems to work well in most cases) and letting him have it over and over again.



Worst of all, the graphics do not reflect the action that is going on. None of the characters react to being hit, except for collapsing when dead, and hits are sometimes scored even when little or no on-screen contact has been made. So, after the first dozen battles, one gets tired of going through the motions, even though the game does offer a variety of enemies and, once, an interesting ally (a Norse god).

The quests get gradually more difficult as one goes on, mainly by taking place in larger areas populated by increasingly dangerous foes. Whenever Conan dies, the game offers tips on how he might have done better and resurrects him. This gives players plenty of chances to finish the game. Needless to say, there is also a Save Game feature so that armchair barbarians can take a rest between bouts of hacking and slashing.

Despite this, however, many players will not be able to finish *Conan* — not because of Hyborea's evil-doers or because they will tire of the game (it is rather addictive, actually), but because of some serious bugs in the program. In the end, it is not the impregnability of Tarantia but plain old programming flaws that present Conan with his greatest challenge.

Conan the Bughunter

One does not want to make too much of these bugs since they will presumably be fixed in future releases of the game. (**Virgin** *is* aware of them and claims to have corrected replacement disks available.) However, for the record, players of the original version should be prepared for some difficulty moving Conan around.

At the start of the game, in Shadizar, the problem is limited to Conan getting "stuck" against corners of buildings. The top-down perspective is such that when Conan tries to walk behind or past a building, he sometimes cannot, because the part of his body that the building should obscure bumps up against it instead. This leads to a lot of backtracking after getting Conan stuck in spots which one does not expect to present any navigational problem.

Later in the game, however, the problem gets really bad, with Conan getting stuck on outstretched tree branches and the like. It gets to the point where one periodically navigates Conan into positions he simply cannot get out of, at which point there is no choice but to re-boot. Even if one manages to avoid such unintentional traps (a matter of luck, really), the constant backtracking and retracing of one's steps becomes unbearable.

These are not the only problems in the game, either. Perhaps the most embarrassing involves the copy-protection scheme — a set of runes printed at the top of each page of the instruction manual — which is snafu'd by not one but *two* blunders. Not only is an incorrect set of runes printed on the very first page of the manual, but the errata sheet correcting this mistake itself contains an error!

Obviously, more care was needed prior to this package's release. However, **Virgin** is supposed to be correcting the problems now, so that future players will be spared the frustration this reviewer had to deal with.

Conan the Aesthete

Unlike the player, whom the game could treat better, the character of Conan himself is well-served by *Conan the Cimmerian*. The game's graphics portray him as hale, tanned and strong-thewed, nearly living up to the magnificent Boris Vallejo painting on the package. Hyborea is richly detailed and well laid out, with rooftops and underground caverns to explore in addition to "street-level" locations. In fact, some of the graphics are as grim and violent as anything put into a computer game in order to portray the dark universe of the late Robert E. Howard as authentically as possible. For example, the opening frame includes a severed head, so gamers should be fairly warned or tantalized, as the case may be. Further, the music in the game, full of brooding melodies and stirring war cries, is both satisfying and appropriate to the dark fantasy milieu, as well.

Fans of Conan will find a great deal to like about this game. It is clever enough to challenge the wit without being a hardcore CRPG, and it offers all the sweat and blood a devoted Robert E. Howard reader could ask for. Though the characters' motivations are never even two-dimensional — Thoth Amon kills Conan's wife because he is the villain and that is what villains do — this is a weakness in the Conan canon in general, not just this game. (Not just *Conan*, either. See also *Tarzan, Gor, and John Jakes' Brak the Barbarian*.)

If barbarian adventuring is what one seeks, *Conan the Cimmerian* provides a refreshingly uncomplicated, unrefined and vigorous example. This is steaming, juicy violence at its most basic, with all of that genre's redeeming and unredeeming qualities.

At least, unlike most games of this ilk, **Virgin** has taken a stab at making Conan a creature of flesh and blood, rather than just another bunch of testosterone-tinted pixels. By letting players participate in the birth of their hero, an added layer of interest, if not actual depth, takes shape. Nietzsche it ain't, but Howard it is! **CGW**



Over There

From Here to Aeternam

by Paul Rigby

Appearing in Europe for the IBM sometime before Christmas '91 will be *Aeternam* – a CRPG that is, according to **Infogrames**, ten times larger than their previous effort, *Drakkhen*. The game centers around Archipelago, where the progression of the indigenous civilization is moving twice as fast as the rest of the world. The player's aim? Well, it is a little undefined to begin with, but with the news of an "evil force" appearing in the island one might get the drift of the plotline. *Aeternam* will feature 256-color VGA graphics with **AdLib** sound board support and "mobile real-time 3-D with height difference" – whatever that means; presumably an advancement in scaling – plus the usual promise of umpteen monsters and animation sequences. It also appears that a CD-ROM version for IBM owners is already in the works.

Impressions has been busy again with the release of an intriguing wargame. In *Fighter Command*, the player takes command of a country's air force and pits it against a nearby opponent. Obviously, the ground-based portion of the conflict is largely ignored. In fact, success and defeat will rest solely upon the aerial effort.

Fighter Command is expandable. This initial release comes complete with the first "module," set in the Middle East, and consists of 28 scenarios which pit individual countries or alliances of several countries against each other. The scenarios in the initial module include: Lebanon versus Jordan, Kuwait versus the United Arab Emirates, Egypt versus Israel, Iraq versus Saudi Arabia (with support from the United States) and Israel (supported by the U.S.) versus a coalition of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt. Each scenario is graded for difficulty and each has three criteria for win/lose situations: population demoralization, media pressure and aerial superiority. Three maps (satellite, strategic and radar) aid play, while the player uses the information they provide to issue orders for flight plans, transferring aircraft between bases, repairs, air cover and armor strikes. In addition, supplies can be regulated and staying in supply can be critical. The game is already out for the Amiga and Atari ST, with an IBM conversion expected.

Those weary adventurers sitting in a favorite armchair with coffee and biscuits at the ready, but bereft of suitable reading material, should hearken to the following. *Syntax* is a bi-monthly adventure magazine on disk, for both the IBM and the Atari ST (although an "Amiga" version is available that runs via the public-domain *ST Emulator* available from *Syntax* on request). *Syntax* is packed with news, reviews, interviews, features, letters, screen shots of new games, hints and tips, solutions plus many other adventure-related files. There is also an in-house public domain library that sells adventures, CRPGs and utilities. One good example of the latter is an intriguing disk called "Mapper" that allows the creation of adventure/RPG maps on-screen for one's favorite game. Public-domain disks are £2.50 each. However, *Syntax*'s editor, Sue Medley, prefers to do business her way. If anyone is willing to contribute an article, solution, hints, etc. on a disk, Sue will return the disk with a public-domain disk, absolutely free! If a shareware disk is chosen, one need only add £1.00 (which is given to the disk's author). The ST version of *Syntax* was first published during July 1989 and is now onto issue 14 and going strong. The IBM version has just been launched. An excellent read, *Syntax* is informative, well-designed and nicely opinionated. *Syntax* costs £5.25 (airmail) and is available from Sue Medley, 9 Warwick Road, Sidcup, Kent, England, DA14 6LJ.

The French have, it appears, a penchant for logic games. They produce enough of them, at any rate. *Booly*, from *Loriciel*, is the latest example. The premise is as simple as switching the basic computer on/off microchip instruction merged with the complexity of the 'domino theory.' For example, the first level displays a grid of blue and grey squares. They must all be switched to grey before one can proceed. Clicking on one square will change it from blue to grey. However, two other squares, for example, may then change from grey to blue. Memorizing how the connections interact with each other is the key to this game. The levels, and there are 300 of them, vary in presentation from multi-colored squares to angels and devils, and so on. The game is currently out for Amiga, Atari ST and Amstrad CPC.

Note: The above games, and any of the other games mentioned in "Over There" in past issues, can be obtained from:

Computer Adventure World, 318 Kensington, Liverpool, England, L7 0EY. Telephone: 01144-51-263-6306.

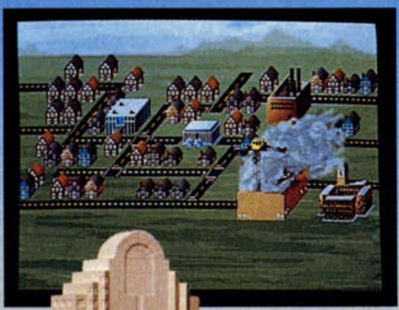
Miles Better Software, 219/221 Cannock Road, Chadsmoor, Cannock, Staffordshire, England, WS11 2DD. Telephone: 01144-543-466-577/8/80; Fax: 01144-543-466-579.

Premier Mail Order, Trybridge Ltd., 8 Buckwins sq., Burnt Mills, Basildon, Essex, England, SS13 1BJ. Telephone: 01144-268-590-766; Fax: 01144-268-590-076.

All of the above telephone numbers assume one can dial direct. If there is any trouble in reaching the retailers, please contact the international operator. **CGW**

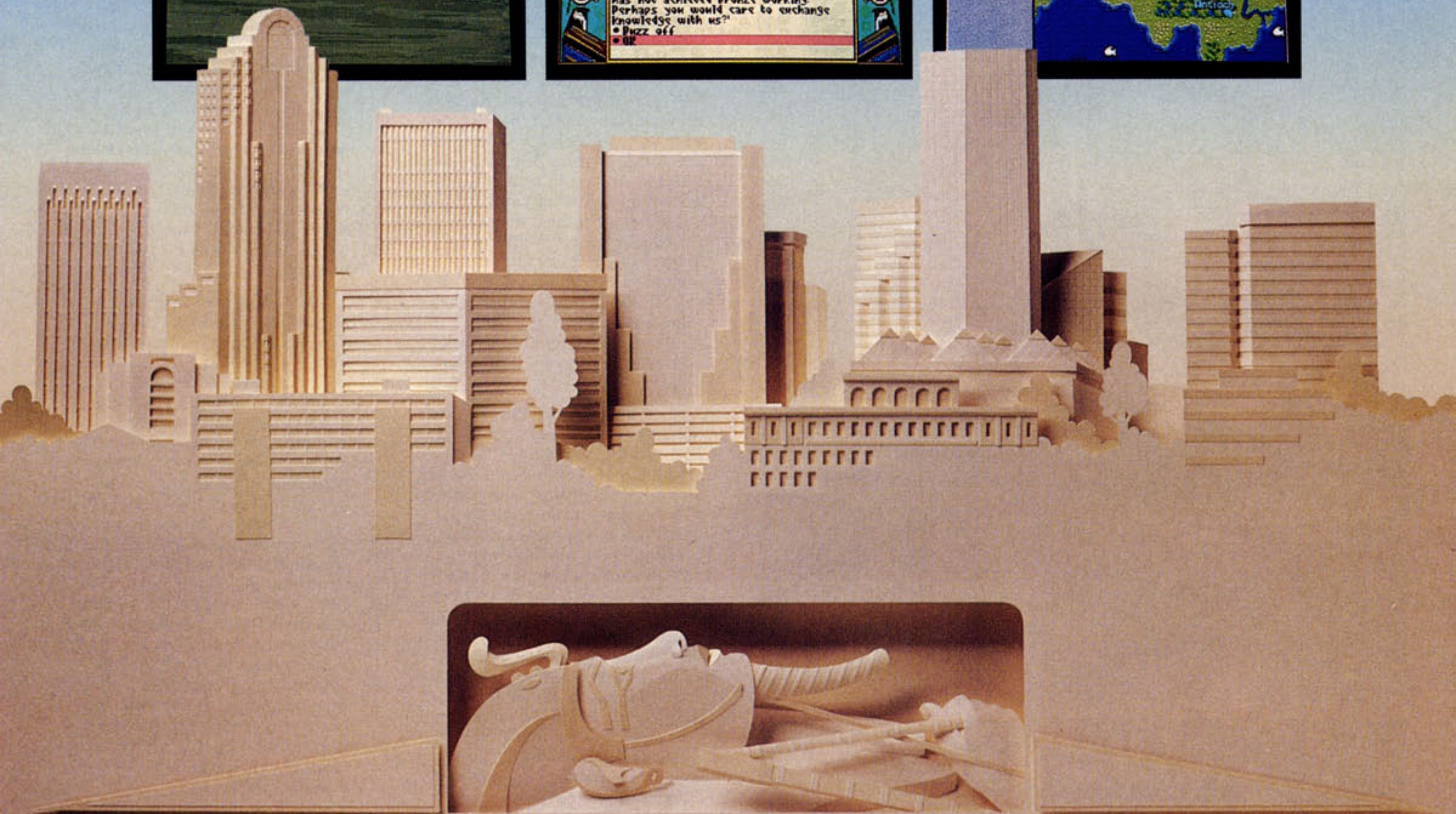
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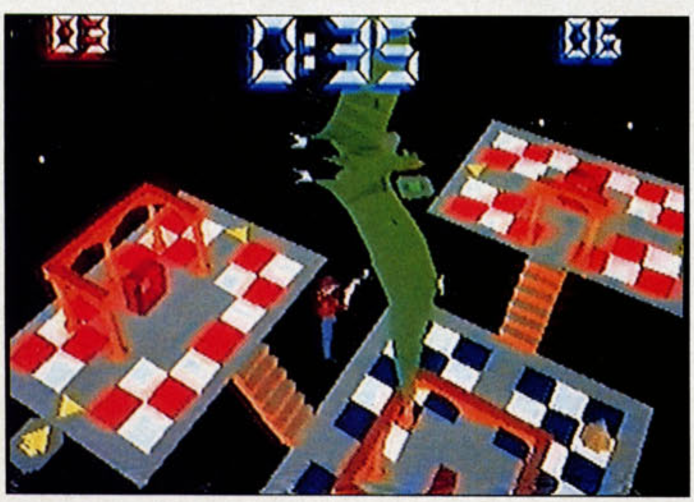
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Inside the Industry

The $65,000 Question: Will Amusement Operators Spend That Much for Virtual Reality?

Spectrum HoloByte's Gilman Louie is tired of simply hearing about virtual reality. He is ready to help make it a reality. Along with **Edison Brothers**, a major distributor of coin-operated amusements, **Spectrum HoloByte** plans to bring "cyberspace" (three-dimensional virtual reality) to the "real" world. In fact, they have already *started* doing so.





On December 11, 1991, both companies hosted both the general and computer media at San Francisco's Club DV8. **Edison Brothers**' Andy Halliday informed *CGW* that more than 3,000 people experienced their products at a recent trade show for amusement park operators; 4,000 people experienced *Dactyl Nightmare* (see "I, Witness Report" for a brief description of the game) at a Dallas, Texas lounge called *Dave*Busters*; more than 700 people paid to play the games at Santa Ana, California's Main Place during a two-day period; the units were exposed to the motion picture industry at several different studios and the same units appeared on NBC's *Today* show. During this tour, Halliday noted that not one person objected about the headsets (many critics had suggested that the American public would not accept re-using headsets), discomfort (some had suggested that the headsets were too heavy) or price (at the paid venues, the company was charging $4.00 for three and one-half minutes). Instead, the games received ready acceptance and enthusiasm at every temporary venue.

Since **Edison Brothers**' main business is with amusement park and arcade operators, *CGW* asked Halliday if there would be any price resistance with regard to placing the total-immersion machines in various locations. Halliday observed that, even at $55,000 for the cockpit games and $65,00-$75,000 for the networked units, these were not the *most* expensive entertainment devices for high-class lounges, clubs, amusement parks and coin-operated arcades. He noted that **Sega**'s *R-360* is more expensive and *not* reprogrammable, whereas these machines *are* reprogrammable. They are also low-maintenance items, since most of the repair work is restricted to easy fixes like replacing worn cables and adjusting headsets. As Halliday stated, "This is not the *next* video game; these machines have *many* applications." That, of course, is where **Spectrum HoloByte**'s new **Cyberstudio** group comes in.

Maxis and **Lucasfilm** veteran A. J. Redmer will head up the unit that will create adventures and simulations for the virtual reality units. The cockpit units are expected to support networked versions of the **Electronic Battlefield Series** (including *Falcon 3.0*, *Avenger A-10* and *Apache AH-64*) by early 1993.

Is VR sufficiently distinct to create its own market? The following is an eyewitness report from veteran gamer and computer game industry observer Russell Sipe, *CGW*'s Publisher and Editor-in-Chief.

I, Witness Report

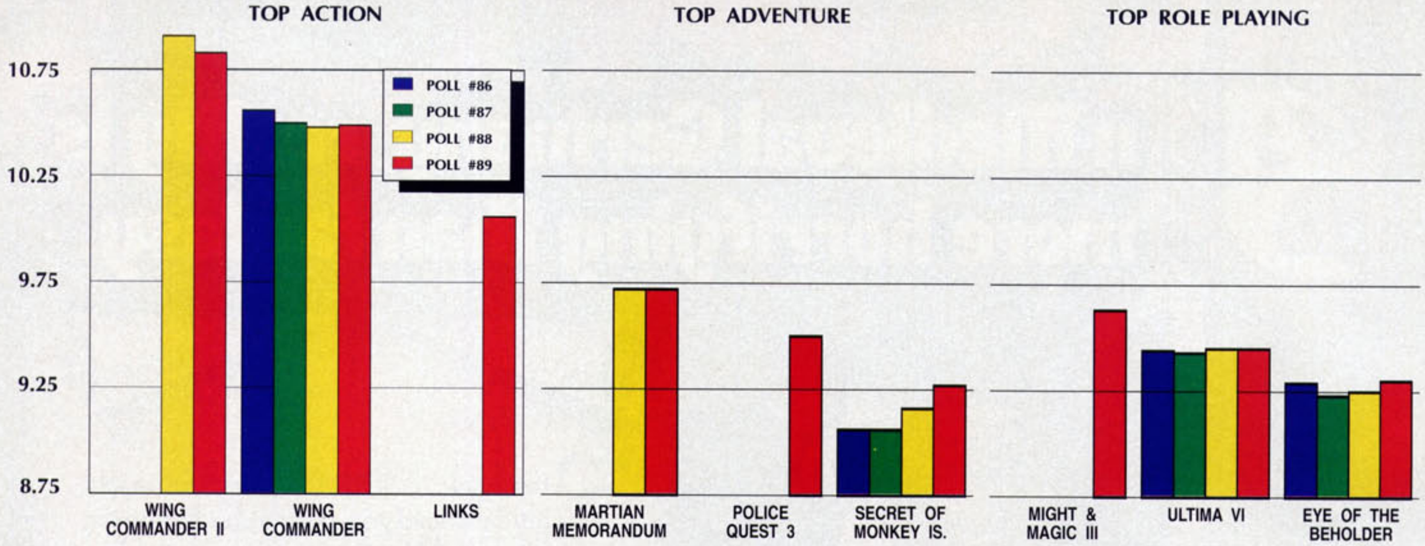
In ten years of covering the computer gaming world I have had a lot of great gaming experiences. None of them could touch what I experienced this week at the DV8 Club in San Francisco when I got my first hands-on experience with virtual reality. Spectrum's CyberStudio and Virtuality (which is making a media tour this month) is everything I had hoped the first generation of virtual reality would be and more.

Three different VR demos were shown. Two sit-down cockpit VR simulators took you on a hang gliding flight and *Afterburner*-style combat simulator flight. However, a third VR product linked four stand-up "cages" into a interactive battle royale by running a program called *Dactyl Nightmare*. Each participant gets into a device that looks like a 21st century version of a electrical lineman's cage (such as you see suspended above electric company utility vehicles). The cage, along with the VR helmet and the VR gun, reads your body movements and recreates them in the virtual world of *Dactyl Nightmare*. The product did an excellent job of mimicking my body movements (to the point that when I squatted down in my cage, my character squatted down as well).

The real thrill came from fighting the three other live opponents in the same VR environment (sort of a three-dimensional chessboard with stairs). I felt like I was reliving R.E. Connell's short story, "The Most Dangerous Game". For three and a half tension-filled, heart-stopping minutes, man was indeed the ultimate prey and predator. Some of the participants reported disorientation when removing their helmets after a couple rounds of combat. It is an intense experience.

VR is here and it is great! **CGW**


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Action/Arcade (AC):
Computer games that emphasize hand-eye coordination and reflexes.

Adventure (AD):
Games that allow you to take an alter ego through a storyline or series of events.

Role-Playing Adventure (RP):
Adventure games that are based on character development (usually involving attributes).

Top Ten Games

Game Title, Rating
Source, Category

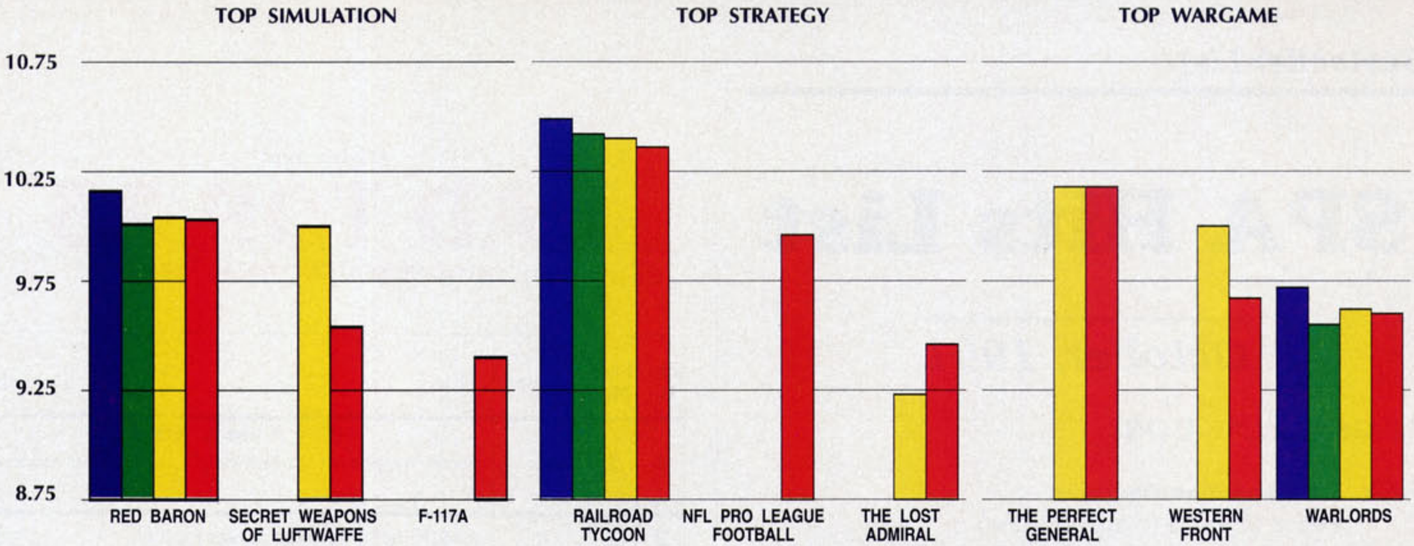
No.	Game	Source	Category	Rating
1	Wing Commander II	Origin	AC	10.83
2	Wing Commander	Origin	AC	10.49
3	Railroad Tycoon	Microprose	ST	10.36
4	The Perfect General	QQP	WG	10.18
5	Links	Access	AC	10.06
6	Red Baron	Dynamix	SI	10.03
7	NFL Pro League Football	Micro Sports	ST	9.96
8	Martian Memorandum	Access	AD	9.72
9	Western Front	SSI	WG	9.67
10	Might & Magic III	New World Computing	RP	9.63

Sports make a run on the **CGW Top Ten** this month with *Links* and *NFL Pro League Football* breaking into the Top Ten. This is the second time *CGW* readers rated *Links*. Unfortunately, *Links* was "rated" too soon on the first go-around (just as it was shipping). Thus, the responses were not large enough to be statistically significant. This time, however, the response was vigorous. *Might and Magic III* debuts at the number one spot among role-playing games (number ten overall), eclipsing ➤

The CGW

No.	Name	Source	Category	Rating
11	Warlords	SSG	WG,ST	9.60
12	Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe	Lucasfilm	SI,ST	9.54
13	Police Quest 3	Sierra	AD	9.50
14	The Lost Admiral	QQP	ST	9.46
15	Ultima VI	Origin	RP	9.45
16	Lemmings	Psygnosis	AC	9.40
	F-117A	Microprose	SI	9.40
18	Eye of the Beholder	SSI	RP	9.30
19	The Secret of Monkey Island	Lucasfilm	AD	9.27
20	Quest for Glory II	Sierra	AD,RP	9.21
21	King's Quest V	Sierra	AD	9.17
22	Megafortress	Three-Sixty	SI,ST	9.15
23	Wings	Cinemaware	AC	9.14
24	Gateway to the Savage Frontier	SSI	RP	9.13
25	Second Front	SSI	WG	9.12
26	Bane of the Cosmic Forge	Sir-Tech	RP	9.10
27	Harpoon	Three-Sixty	WG	9.09
28	Chuck Yeager's Air Combat	Electronic Arts	SI	9.08
	Mech Warrior	Activision	ST,SI	9.08
	Silent Service II	Microprose	SI	9.08
31	Battlehawks 1942	Lucasfilm	AC,SI	9.05
32	Red Storm Rising	Microprose	SI	9.04
33	Quest for Glory	Sierra	RP	9.00
34	Ultima V	Origin	RP	8.99
	Rules of Engagement	Mindcraft	ST	8.99
36	Space Quest IV	Sierra	AD	8.98
37	Space Quest III	Sierra	AD	8.97
	Sword of Aragon	SSI	WG,ST	8.97
39	Command HQ	Microplay	WG,ST	8.96
	Powermonger	Electronic Arts	ST	8.96
41	Wasteland	Electronic Arts	RP	8.95
	Conan the Cimmerian	Virgin	AC,RP	8.95
43	Pools of Darkness	SSI	RP	8.94
44	Overrun	SSI	WG	8.93
45	Gunship 2000	Microprose	SI	8.92
46	Falcon	Spectrum Holobyte	SI	8.90
47	Jack Nicklaus Unlimited Golf	Accolade	ST	8.89
	Martian Dreams	Origin	RP	8.89
49	NFL Challenge	XOR Corporation	ST	8.87
50	Romance of the 3 Kingdoms	Koei	ST,RP	8.86
51	Indianapolis 500	Electronic Arts	SI	8.85
52	Populous	Electronic Arts	ST	8.84
53	Elvira	Accolade	RP	8.82
54	Might & Magic II	New World	RP	8.81
55	The Magic Candle	Mindcraft	RP	8.80

Games are often listed in more than one category. In this case, the first listed category is considered primary. In order



Simulation (SI):
Games based on first-person perspectives of real-world environments.

Strategy (ST):
Games that emphasize strategic planning and problem-solving.

Wargames (WG):
Simulations of historical or futuristic warfare from a command perspective.

Poll

➤ *Ultima VI*, which had held top role-playing honors since August 1991. *Police Quest 3* debuts at #13 overall and #2 in adventure games, while *F-117A* knocks *Chuck Yeager Air Combat* out of the #3 spot among simulations. The normal trend over several polls is for a game to lose a little ground with each re-rating. However, *The Secret of Monkey Island* and *The Lost Admiral* are showing strong tendencies in the other direction.

No.	Name	Source	Category	Rating
	LHX Attack Chopper	Electronic Arts	AC	8.80
	Rise of the Dragon	Dynamix/Sierra	AD	8.80
58	Bard's Tale III	Electronic Arts	RP	8.77
59	Bandit Kings	Koei	ST,RP	8.75
	Heart of China	Dynamix	AD	8.75
61	Covert Action	Microprose	AC,AD	8.73
62	Battles of Napoleon	SSI	WG	8.72
	Battlechess	Interplay	ST	8.72
64	Breach 2	Omnitrend	ST,RP	8.71
	Starflight II	Electronic Arts	RP	8.71
66	Neuromancer	Interplay	AD	8.70
67	F-15 Strike Eagle II	Microprose	SI	8.69
68	Typhoon of Steel	SSI	WG	8.67
	Curse of the Azure Bonds	SSI	RP	8.67
70	Indiana Jones/Graphic Adv.	Lucasfilm	AD	8.65
	Ballistyx	Psygnosis	AC	8.65
72	Action Stations	RAW Entertainment	WG	8.64
73	Armada 2525	Interstel	ST	8.63
74	Wayne Gretzky Hockey	Bethesda	AC,ST	8.62
75	Pool of Radiance	SSI	RP	8.61
76	King's Quest IV	Sierra	AD	8.59
77	Buck Rogers	SSI	RP	8.57
	Tony LaRussa's Ultimate Baseball	SSI	ST,AC	8.57
79	Chessmaster 2100	Software Toolworks	ST	8.56
	Wide World of Sports Boxing	Data East	AC	8.56
81	Genghis Khan	Koei	ST,RP	8.54
82	Future Wars	Interplay	AD	8.53
83	Panzer Strike	SSI	WG	8.51
	Leisure Suit Larry III	Sierra	AD	8.51
	Sword of the Samurai	Microprose	ST,RP	8.51
86	Savage Empire	Origin	RP	8.48
87	Champions of Krynn	SSI	RP	8.45
	Jetfighter II	Velocity	SI	8.45
89	Manhunter 2	Sierra	AD	8.42
90	Nobunaga's Ambition II	Koei	ST,RP	8.40
	The Adventures of Willy Beamish	Dynamix	AD	8.40
92	TV Sports Football	Cinemaware	AC,ST	8.39
93	Strike Fleet	Electronic Arts	WG	8.37
94	Fire Brigade	Panther	WG	8.34
95	BattleTech II: Revenge	Infocom	WG,RP	8.33
96	Rocket Ranger	Cinemaware	AC,AD	8.32
97	Nobunaga's Ambition	Koei	ST,RP	8.30
98	Drakkhen	Data East	RP	8.27
	688 Attack Sub	Electronic Arts	SI,ST	8.27
100	Lord of the Rings	Interplay	RP	8.26

Hall of Fame

The Games in CGW's Hall of Fame Have Been Highly Rated by our Readers over Time. They are Worthy of Play by All.

Bard's Tale I

Chessmaster

Dungeon Master

Earl Weaver Baseball

Empire

F19 Stealth Fighter

Gettysburg

Gunship

Harpoon

Kampfgruppe

King's Quest V

M-1 Tank Platoon

Mech Brigade

Might & Magic

M.U.L.E.

Pirates

SimCity

Starflight

Their Finest Hour

Ultima III

Ultima IV

War in Russia

Wizardry

to be recognized as the "Top Game" in a given category, a game must be listed as being primarily of that specific type.

SPA Hits List

October, 1991

PC Games (MS-DOS)

Rank Title and Manufacturer

1. *Police Quest 3* (Sierra On-Line)
2. *Leisure Suit Larry V* (Sierra On-Line)
3. *F-117A Stealth Fighter 2.0* (MicroProse)
4. *Gunship 2000* (MicroProse)
5. *Wing Commander II* (Origin)
6. *Earl Weaver Baseball 2.0* (Electronic Arts)
7. *Adventures of Willy Beamish* (Sierra On-Line)
8. *King's Quest V* (Sierra On-Line)
9. *Might & Magic III* (New World Computing)
10. *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe* (Lucasfilm Games)
11. *AD&D Collectors Edition* (Strategic Simulations)
12. *Flight Simulator 4.0* (Microsoft)
13. *Martian Memorandum* (Access)
14. *Pools of Darkness* (Strategic Simulations)
15. *Mike Ditka Football* (Accolade)
16. *Links* (Access)
17. *Castles* (Interplay Productions)
18. *Wordtris* (Spectrum Holobyte)
19. *Lemmings* (Psygnosis)
20. *Spellcasting 201* (Legend Entertainment)

Home Education (MS-DOS)

Rank Title and Manufacturer

1. *Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego* (Broderbund)
2. *Where in the U.S.A. is Carmen Sandiego* (Broderbund)
3. *New Math Blaster Plus* (Davidson)
4. *Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing* (Software Toolworks)
5. *Reader Rabbit II* (The Learning Company)
6. *SimEarth* (Maxis)
7. *Where in America's Past is Carmen Sandiego* (Broderbund)
8. *Where in Time is Carmen Sandiego* (Broderbund)
9. *Algeblaster Plus* (Davidson)
10. *Treasure Mountain* (The Learning Company)

Figures courtesy of PC Research. This list is based on units sold by Software Etc., Babbages, Waldensoftware and Electronics Boutique. For more information, please contact PC Research at (703) 435-1025. CGW

The Icing on the Slope

Accolade's The Games: Winter Challenge

by Eric Masterson

TITLE:	The Games: Winter Challenge
SYSTEMS:	Amiga, IBM and Sega Genesis
# PLAYERS:	1-10
PRICE:	$54.95
PROTECTION:	Code Wheel Look-Up
DESIGNERS:	Jeff Sember and Mike Benna
PUBLISHER:	Accolade San Jose, CA

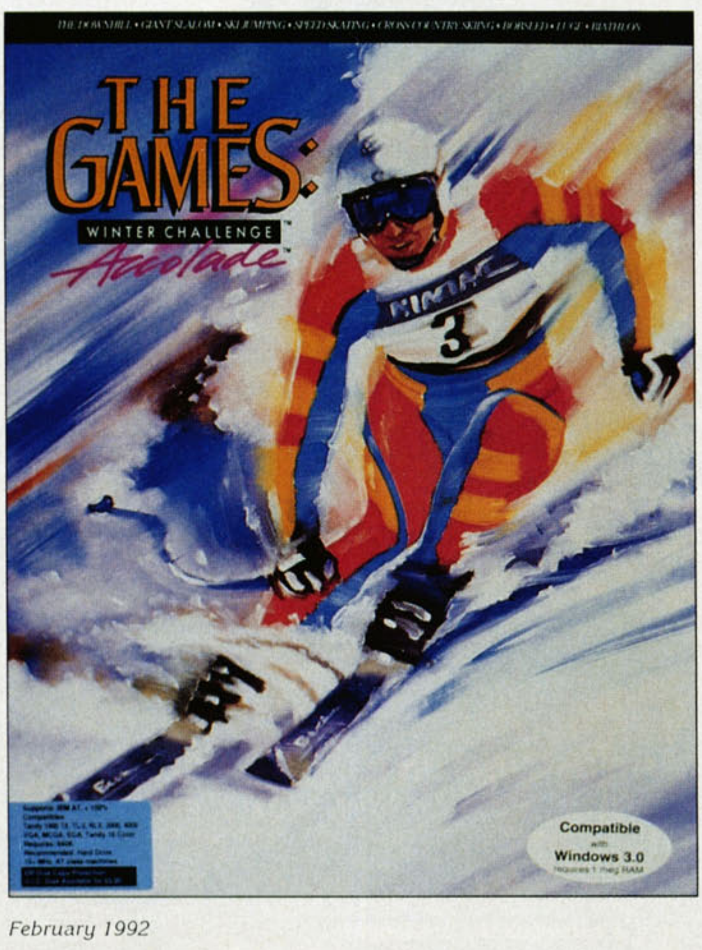












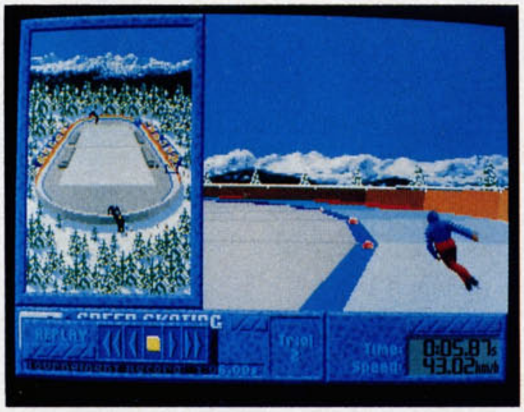




Multi-venued games have been a staple of the computer game industry for many years. The *best* multi-venued games have usually involved Olympic events (**Epyx**' celebrated licensed products of the mid-1980s and **Electronic Arts**' parody of the "Games," *Caveman Ugh-lympics*, immediately come to mind). **Accolade**'s *The Games: Winter Challenge* uses today's faster frame rates, VGA graphics capability and digitized sound capacity to allow players to experience competitive skiing, sledding and skating to a more exciting degree than in any of its distinguished predecessors. All told, there are eight different events in the package. Add to these features the capability for running the game under *Windows 3.0* (with at least 1 MB of RAM) and one might well expect more computer skiers flying down the slopes in adrenaline-filled downhill runs than ever before.

The Games: Winter Challenge uses a third-person perspective to present the action. The player follows along right behind the

on-screen competitor and the suspended disbelief is sometimes vivid enough to cause him/her to duck under the spray of simulated snow. The action is fast and furious with downhill events reminiscent of the smooth-flowing *Downhill Challenge*, published in the U.S. by **Broderbund**. The latter was not as successful on the IBM as it was on the Atari ST because of the CGA color palette and the necessity of slowing down faster processors with a separate software patch in order to compete on 286s and above. Veterans of the earlier game might also be interested in the fact that the ski jumping in *The Games: Winter Challenge* is much more forgiving than the event was in *Downhill Challenge*, however.



The Agony of Defeat

Readers who are part of the television generation will probably never forget the film footage which always accompanied the line "agony of defeat" during the opening credits of *ABC's Wide World of Sports*. The out-of-control ski jumper crashing off the end of the jump and tumbling to a stop reminded viewers on a weekly basis that sports competition is no picnic. In the **Accolade** version of the ski jumping competition, the player's athlete must fly off the ramp, keep his/her skis in a parallel position (in order to maintain lift) and then, land. The key is, of course, to do all of this without eating snow. If one wipes out on the ramp, the would-be jumper may slide down the ramp and make the *ABC Wide World of Sports* jumper look graceful.

Gamers looking for more fast-paced challenges can opt for the luge or bobsled competitions. In both events, one's athletes scream down a snake-like course of ice-covered, polygon-filled walls. The goal is to get maximum speed as quickly as possible and to keep the vehicles in the groove so that the time keeps getting shaved with every run. These events are not particularly difficult when compared to others in the game.

Another fast-paced event is the giant slalom competition. The challenge in this event requires the player to maneuver the on-screen skier through the gates of a progressively more difficult course. As in real life, excess speed tends to make one's digitized athlete go unnecessarily wide in certain turns and eventually adds unwelcome seconds to the player's final time.

Those who like to test their coordination may choose the giant slalom, but those who like to "flat out" go for it will opt for the challenge of downhill skiing. In fact, the downhill simulation is so exhilarating that fast skiers may achieve as much air time during

this competition as they do in the ski jump! This competition has obviously been crafted by fans of this sport.



Ski Shooting

The biathlon event combines the leisurely pace of cross-country skiing, the slowest of the events depicted, with the challenge of target shooting. Both the cross-country skiing event and the skiing in the biathlon require more emphasis on timing than on quick reflexes. The major benefit of these events is to allow the programming team to show off their ability to create bitmapped scenery. The biathlon simply allows the on-screen skier to ski to a target area and then, enter the shooting mode. One is given five targets to shoot at and penalized 15 seconds for each miss. Shooting is done standing or prone.

One of the more graceful events is speed skating. The player has the digitized skater compete against the clock by performing laps around the 400-meter track. This is the only event where one must wait for the starting gun. One false start is allowed, so that the player does not become totally frustrated.

The Judges Are Ready

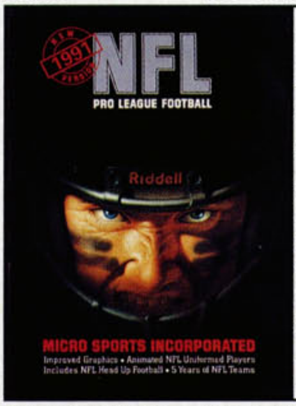
The user interface is a cool blue bitmapped menu system which not only allows players to navigate about the game with ease, but also allows the painless use of the installation program. The virtual world is a clever blend of bitmapped mountains matted in over polygon-filled slopes and courses. There are bitmapped grandstands, trees and even a polygon-filled moving ski lift. Also, the animations of video-digitized athletes add to the realism. In addition, there is a video feature which allows the saving of one's finest events to disk-based film clips for future viewing. In fact, about the only disturbing factor concerning the "look" of the game is that during the events, there is a map window which covers some of the left-hand portion of the screen. While this is useful in order to see where one is *located* on a particular course, it is somewhat obtrusive. An option for a full-screen, and less distracting, view would have been most welcome.

Perhaps the nicest fact about the game is that an average full-scale Olympic competition with all eight events (depending upon the number of participants) may be completed during a lunch hour or during the half-time of an NFL football game. The action is well simulated and can be very addicting. If the potential player is the least bit interested in downhill skiing, he/she is likely to find this game to be most playable and entertaining. CGW

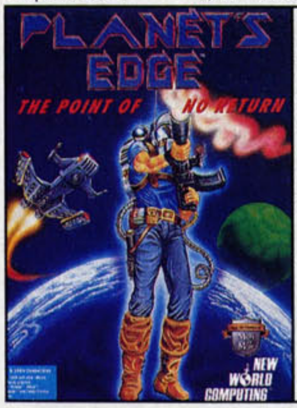
CHIPS & BITS CALL 800 -753 -GAME

IBM WARGAMES

Action North Atlantic	$26
Action off River Plate	$26
Action Stations	$29
Air Raid Pearl Harbour	$26
Amer Civil War 1 - 3 Ea	$22
Ancient Battles	$32
Banzai	$26



Battle of the Atlantic	$39
Battle of Austerlitz	$12
Battle Stations	$26
Battle Tank Barbarosa	$39
Battle Tank Kursk	$39
Battles of Napoleon	$30
Battleship Bismark	$26
Blitzkrieg Ardennes	$29
Borodino	$30
Bravo Romeo Delta	$37
Campaign	$32
Carriers at War	$37
Civil War NINGA	$39
Civil War SSI	$42
Charge Light Brigade	$34
Cohort	$34
Conflict	$15
Conflict: Middle East	$37
Conflict in Vietnam	$12
Decision at Gettysburg	$29
Fall Gelb	$39
Fifth Eskadra	$39
Fire Brigade	$34
Fleet Med	$39
Frontline	$34
German Raider Atlantis	$26
Gettysburg:Turning Pnt	$37
Golan Front	$39
Grand Fleet	$39
Grey Seas, Grey Skies	$39
Halls of Montezuma	$22
Harpoon	$37
Harpoon Set 2 or 3	$19
Harpoon Set 4	$24
Harpoon Editor	$27



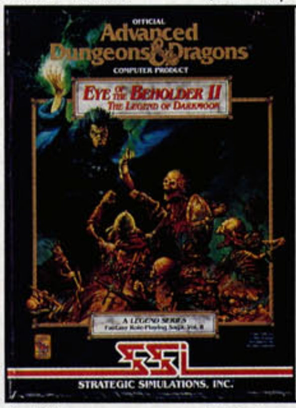
Harpoon Challenger Pak	$54
High Seas	$33
In Harms Way	$39
Kampfgruppe	$37
Kriegsmarine	$39
Kursk Campaign	$39
Long Lance	$39
MacArthur's War	$29

IBM WARGAMES

Main Bttle Tank C Grm	$39
Main Bttle Tank N Grm	$39
Main Bttle Tank ME	$39
Malta Storm	$39
Man of War	$39
Mare Nostrum	$26
Marianas Turkey Shoot	$28

'NFL PRO LEAGUE FOOTBALL' from **MICRO SPORTS INC.** is a strategic football game. You take the field with 2 billion different play combinations. Features include animated uniformed players, weather conditions, true modem head-to-head play, 5 years of teams with real players names & data, a stats keeper with 140 different categories, and a challenging computer coach to play. **$49**

Midway	$26
Moscow Campaign	$39
Nam 65-75	$45
Northern Fleet	$39
Operation Overlord	$39
Pacific Storm Midway	$39
Pacific Storm Solomons	$39
Panzer Battles	$22



Patriot	$38
Patriot Battle Sets Ea	$24
Patriot Editor	$27
Patton v Rommel	$15
Patton Strikes Back	$37
Prelude to Jutland	$26
Red Lightning	$12
Return to the Falklands	$28

'PLANET'S EDGE' from **NEW WORLD** is a save the Earth sci fi roleplaying game. Track down a missing Earth & return it to its own place & time. Explore dozens of solar systems featuring unique inhabitants & environments. Design your own space ship. Features puzzles with multiple solutions, 3D perspective, strategy or real time combat, 256 color VGA & sound board support. **$38**

Rising Sun	$26
Rommel at El Alamein	$39
Rommel at Gazala	$39
Rommel North Africa	$24
Rorke's Drift	$34
Sea Power & the State	$39
Second Front	$37
Seventh Fleet	$39

IBM STRATEGY

Ancient Art War	$31
Ancient Art War at Sea	$31
Ancient Art War in Sky	$34
Armada 2525	$32
Balance of the Planet	$19
Bandit Kings of China	$37
Battle Isle	$32
Big Business	$32
Black Gold	$10
Breach 2 Enhanced	$19
Breach 2 Scenario Disk	$15
Castles	$36
Castles Disk 1	$19
Centurion	$19
Civilization	$39
Command HQ	$34
Crisis in the Kremlin	$37
Defender of the Crown	$12
Designasaurus 2	$28
Dino Wars	$28
DRAGON Force	$31
Dragon Lord	$12
Dune	$34
Empire	$31
Final Conflict	$34
FireTeam 2200	$29
FireTeam Const Kit	$25
Fort Apache	$34
Full Metal Planet	$31
Genghis Khan	$37
Gold of the Americas	$12
Guns or Butter	$12
Hidden Agenda	$39
Imperium	$26

'EYE OF THE BEHOLDER 2' from **SSI** is a first person role playing game. A bigger adventure including forests, a temple, catacombs, and three huge towers. There are more people to meet, clues to learn, an improved point and click interface, and lots of newer, smarter, and meaner monsters. More complex non-player characters. Features 256 color VGA & sound board support. **$38**

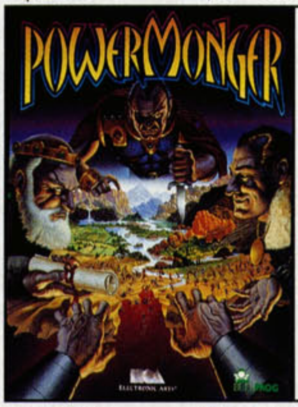
Lemmings	$32
Lemmings Data Disk	$19
L'Empereur	$37
Liberty or Death	$37
Lost Admiral	$34
Lost Patrol	$12
Medieval Lords	$37
Medieval Warriors	$19
Merchant Colony	$34
Millenium	$27
Nobunaga 1 or 2	$37
Nuclear War	$12
Objection	$34
Objection Enh	$89
Ogre	$19
Omega	$30
Operation Combat	$24
Overlord	$28

IBM WARGAMES

Stalingrad Campaign	$39
Storm Across Europe	$37
Suez 73	$29
To The Rhine	$39
Typhoon of Steel	$37
UMS 1	$19
UMS 2 Nations at War	$34
UMS 2 Desert Storm	$20
UMS 2 Planet Editor	$28
V for Victory	$38
Vulcan	$34
War in the Falklands	$26
Warship Changed Hist	$26
Waterloo	$12
Western Front	$37
White Death	$29

IBM STRATEGY

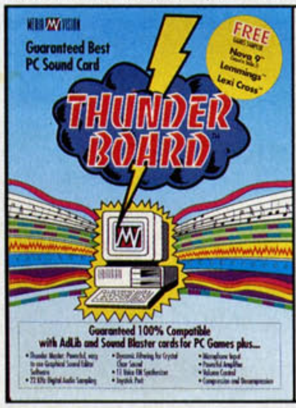
Paladin	$28
Perfect General	$34
Perfect General Disk 2	$23
Populous	$21
Populous & Simcity	$34
Populous Promise Land	$14
Populous 2	$38



Power Monger	$34
Project Moonbase	$24
Project Space Station	$15
Railroad Empire	$34
Railroad Tycoon	$34
Reach for the Stars 3	$12
Renegade Legn Intcptr	$37
Revolution 76	$29
Rider of Rohan	$32
Romanc 3 Kngdm 1or2	$42
Rules of Engagement	$38
Second Conflict	$34
Seven Cities of Gold	$12
Siege	$38
Sim Ant	$37
SimCity	$29
SImCity & Populous	$34
SimCity Graphic 1 or 2	$23
SimCity Terrain Editor	$15
SimEarth	$41
Star Control	$29
Starfleet 1 or 2	$38
Stellar Crusade	$12
Strategic Forces	$19
Sword of Aragon	$28
Theatre of War	$32
Theatre Sets	$21
Visions of Aftermath	$12
Warlords	$29
Worlds at War	$29

IBM ADVENTURE

Advnts Willie Beamish	$34
All Dogs Go to Heaven	$19
Altered Destiny	$34
Arthur Quest Excaliber	$12



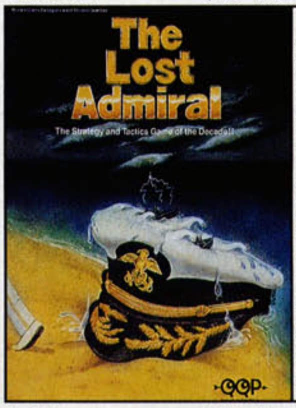
B.A.T.	$19
B.A.T. 2	$32
Bart Simpsn House Wrd	$32
Black Cauldron	$14
Castle of Dr Brain	$29
Chmbr Sci Mutnt Prstss	$15
Code Name: Iceman	$21
Colonel Bequest	$21

IBM ADVENTURE

Colonel Bequest 2	$34
Conquests of Camelot	$21
Conquests of Longbow	$34
Conspiracy Deadlock	$34
Countdown	$37
Covert Action	$29
Crime Does Not Pay	$34

'POWER MONGER' from **ELECTRONIC ARTS** is a unique strategy game. A living world with forests, mountains, waterfalls, rivers, towns, farmers, shepherds, merchants, fisherman, weather, homes, jobs & NPCs with individual identities. Plan, produce, invent, negotiate, bribe, recruit subordinates, & feed your people. 3D zoom & rotate, play by modem, random maps & great graphics. **$34**

Crime Wave	$37
Dark Heart of Uukrul	$34
David Wolf:Scrt Agnt	$15
Deja Vu	$12
Deja Vu 2 Lost in LV	$12
Die Hard	$28
Don't Go Alone	$12
Duck Tales	$28



Earthrise	$12
East v West:Berlin '48	$9
Eco Quest 1	$34
Felony	$12
Fool's Errand	$12
Free DC	$34
Future Wars	$28
Gamma Force	$12

'THUNDER BOARD' from **MEDIAVISION** is a sound board that is **100% compatible** with Soundblaster and Adlib cards for PC Games. It reproduces all digitized sounds using an 8 bit Digital to Audio Converter (DAC). Features include dynamic filtering, 11 Voice FM music synthesizer, sampling rate up to 22 KHz, microphone input, joystick port, and a 2 watt power amp. **$84**

Geisha	$32
Godfather	$32
Gold Rush	$24
Grail Quest	$27
Harley Davidson	$12
Heart of China	$34
Honeymooners	$12
Hostage	$12

IBM ADVENTURE

Hound of Shadow	$19
Indy Jones L Crsd ega	$22
Indy Jones L Crsd vga	$28
Indy Jones Fate Atlantis	$38
It Came from the Desert	$19
James Bond Stealth Aff	$34
Jetsons	$19
Journey	$12
King's Quest 1Enhncd	$34
King's Quest 2 or 3	$28
King's Quest 4	$34
King's Quest 5 ega	$34
King's Quest 5 vga	$39
Lane Mastodon	$12
Leather Goddesses	$12
Leather Goddesses 2	$42
Leisure Suit Lrry 1 ega	$16
Leisure Suit Lrry 1 vga	$34
Leisure Suit Lrry 2	$34
Leisure Suit Lrry 3	$34
Leisure Suit Lrry 5	$34
License to Kill	$26
Loom	$19
Lost in LA	$37
Lost Treasures Infocom	$59
Magnetic Scrolls Bndl	$37
Manhunter NY or SF	$28
Maniac Mansion	$18
Martian Memorandum	$37
Mean Streets	$37
Mixed Up Mthr Goose	$24
Mixed Up Fairy Tales	$32
Moebius	$28
Murder by the Dozen	$15

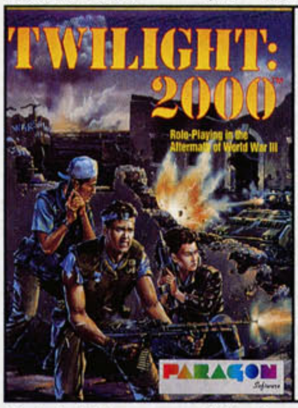
'LOST ADMIRAL' from **QUANTUM QUALITY PRODUCTIONS** is a turn based production naval strategy game. Features 9 scenarios, a random map scenario, 15 campaign games, flagships with special abilities, very strong artificial intelligence, in depth officers ranking system, accumulates your career history as you play, 2 player option, and sound board support. In short better than EMPIRE. **$34**

Murder Club	$28
Murders in Space	$12
Neuromancer	$15
Oregon Trail	$28
Police Quest 1	$28
Police Quest 2 or 3	$34
Prince of Persia	$25
Rise of the Dragon	$34
Robin Hood	$34
Search for the King	$37
Secrt Monky Islnd 1ega	$28
Secrt Monky Islnd 1vga	$38
Secrt Monky Islnd 2	$38
Sex Olympics	$24
Sex Vixens from Space	$12
Shogun	$12
Sinbad	$12
Snoopy	$9
Sleeping Gods Lie	$27
Space Quest 1	$34
Space Quest 2	$28
Space Quest 3 or 4	$34
Spellcasting 101 or 201	$34
Startrek 5	$12
Startrek 25th Aniversry	$36
Street Rod 1	$19
Street Rod 2	$28
Time Quest	$29
Total Eclipse	$12
Train	$6
Uninvited	$12
Universe 1 -3 Ea	$34
War in Middle Earth	$15
Whales	$34
Where Amrcas Pst CSD	$37

IBM MAC & AMIGA GAMES FOR LESS

IBM TRADITIONAL

3D Pool	$12
Advance to Boardwalk	$15
Amarillo Slim Poker	$15
Battlechess 1 or 2	$31
Big Boggle	$15
Blackjack	$34
Ceasar's Palace	$15



'TWILIGHT 2000' from **MICROPROSE** is a roleplaying game set in the aftermath of **WW3**. Test your leadership skills by commanding a squad of 20. Features individual motivations, values & moral code, 50 attributes/skills, 60 careers, overhead 3D outdoor views, detailed 3D military vehicle simulators, masses of vehicles, weapons, & explosives to kill & maim with. 256 color VGA, adlib support. **$34**

Centerfold Squares	$21
Check Mate	$36
Chessmaster 2000	$27
Chessmaster 2100	$31
Chessmaster 3000	$32
Chess Net	$34
Clue Master Detective	$15
Cribbage King/Gin King	$19
Crossword Magic	$32
Dealers Choice Poker	$34
Edwrd O Thrp Blck Jck	$29
Electric Jigsaw	$15
Family Crosswords	$28
Femmes Fatale	$28
Games People Play	$27
GO Master Deluxe	$89
GO Master 5 Deluxe	$109
GO Joseki Genius	$39
GO Junior	$19
GO Master	$34
GO Master 5	$39
GO Master 5 Toolkit	$39
GO Scribbler	$34
GO Tactical Wizard	$39
Grand Slam Bridge	$24
Hollywood Squares	$15
Hoyle's Games 1 or 2	$21
Hoyle's Games 3	$28
Ishido	$34
Jeopardy 1 or 2	$10
Jeopardy Silver Edition	$15
Jones in the Fast Lane	$24
Lexicross	$25
Living Jigsaws	$9
Mental Blocks	$15



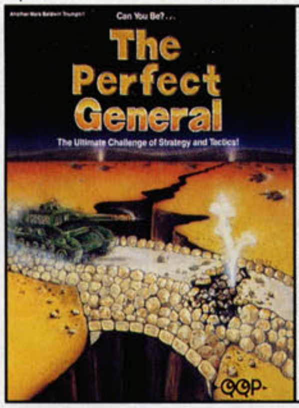
'STRIP POKER 3' from **ARTWORX** is a poker game for adults. It combines the strategic play action of 5 card draw poker with very unusual table stakes. Pit your skill against Laura, Greta, and Kami, each have their own style and personality. Includes digitized VGA graphics, simultaneous play against up to three opponents, digitized speech, and mouse support. 4 Data Disks available. **$31**

IBM ADVENTURE

Where Europe CSD	$30
Where USA CSD	$30
Where World CSD	$27
Where World CSD Dlx	$49
Where Time CSD	$30
Wonderland	$34
Zak McKracken	$18

IBM TRADIONTAL

Monopoly	$24
Penthouse Jigsaw	$24
Price is Right	$15
Prime TIme Hits 1 or 2	$24
Puzznic	$25
Rack'em	$12
Risk	$24
Sargon 4 or 5	$34
Scrabble	$24
Scrabble Deluxe	$34
Scruples	$28
Shanghai 2	$31
Solitaire Royale	$19
Sorry	$15
Spot	$24



'PERFECT GENERAL' from **QQP INC** is a turn based ground war game. Features 12 years of play testing, great maps in VGA, easy to use mouse or keyboard interface, 14 scenarios, very strong artificial intelligence, hidden movement, line of sight option, in depth player ranking system, saves your career history as you play, 2 player option, modem play, sound board support. **$34**

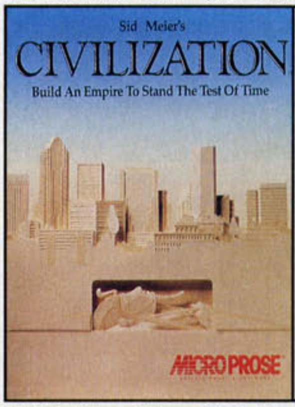
Stratego	$31
Strip Poker 2	$28
Strip Poker 3	$31
Strip Poker Data 1-5 Ea	$19
Super Tetris	$32
Tetris	$24
Trivial Pursuit	$26
Trump Castle	$25
Trump Castle 2	$32
Vegas Casino 1 or 2	$10
Vegas Gambler	$28
Video Poker	$32
Wheel of Fortune 1-3 Ea	$10
Wheel of Fortune Gold	$15
Wrld Chmp Backgamn	$24
Wrld Chmp Cribbage	$24

IBM SPORTS

4D Boxing	$32
4th & Inches	$12
4th & Inches Teams	$10
1992 Winter Olympics	$32
ABC Boxing	$32
ABC Mon Night	$37
All Star Sports Pak	$34
APBA Baseball	$28
APBA Encyclopedia	$34
APBA General Manager	$31
APBA Innovator	$34
APBA Stat Master	$39
APBA Wizard	$31
APBA 1908 - 91 Ea	$21
APBA Basketball	$28
APBA Bowling	$19
APBA Football	$49
Basketball Challenge	$28
B ball Ch. 1987 - 88 Ea	$13
B ball Ch. 1989 - 90 Ea	$17
Bo Jackson Baseball	$32
Blades of Steel	$26
Championship Baseball	$9
Cycles Grand Prix	$28
Daily Double Horse	$19
Days of Thunder	$25
Fast Break	$17
Games Winter Challenge	$37
GFL Champ Football	$9
Grand Prix	$24
Grand Prix Circuit	$17
Greg Norman Shark Att	$25
Gretsky Hockey 2	$34
Gretsky League	$26
Hardball	$12
Hardball 2	$28
Hat Trick	$9
Indianapolis 500	$19
Joe Montana Football	$31
John Elway's QB	$6
King's Beach Volleyball	$15
Lakers v Celtics	$19
LH 3 in 1 Football	$30
LH Boxing	$30
LH College Basketball	$30
LH Full Count Baseball	$30
LH Hockey	$30
LH Pro Basketball	$30
LH Team Disks	$15
LH League Leaders	$15
LH Utility Disks	$15
Links Golf	$37
Links Course 1 -5 Ea	$17
Low Blow	$12
Madden Football	$32
Madden TD 89	$18
Madden TD 90	$18
Madden Football 2	$32
Magic Johnson Fst Brk	$6
Magic Johnson MVP	$18
Mario Andretti Racing	$32
Mean 18 Golf	$27
Mean 18 Course 5 & 6	$25
ML Basbll Mngr's Chllng	$24
ML World Series Disks	$17
ML TD 1982 - 1990 Ea	$17
ML All Stars	$17
ML Franchise Disks Ea	$20
ML Box Score Stats	$20

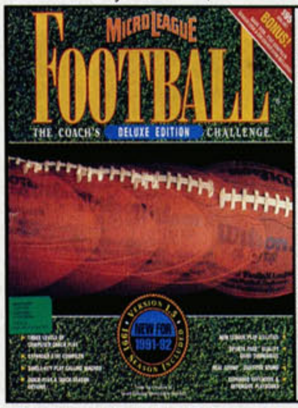
IBM SPORTS

ML GM Disk 3	$25
ML Roster Security	$20
Microleague Basketball	$28
ML Personal Pro Golf	$28
Microleague Football	$28
ML Football Deluxe	$39
ML Ftball GM/Owners	$25



'CIVILIZATION' from **MICROPROSE** "is a competitive multi-player strategy game with a great deal of replayability" **CGW**. You explore cities, continents, and the world in an **EMPIRE** like way. You make economic decisions prioritizing technological growth in order to advance your civilization more rapidly than the other players. The best of both **SIMCITY** & **EMPIRE**. **$39**

ML Ftball Team Disks	$17
ML Wrestling	$28
Mike Ditka Football	$34
Motocross	$9
NASCAR Challenge	$31
NCAA College Football	$36
NFL Challenge	$60
NFL 1984 - 1987 Ea	$15
NFL 1988 - 1991 Ea	$22
NFL Preseason Disk	$22
NFL All Star Teams	$22
NFL College Alumni	$22
NFL College Teams	$19
NFL Dream Teams	$20
NFL Greatest Teams	$22
NFL Roster Editor	$20
NFL Situation Editor	$20
NFLP roleague Football	$49
Nicklaus Greatest 18	$34
Nicklaus Unlimited Golf	$37
NG Clip Art	$17
NG Course 2	$6
NG Course 1 & 2	$19
NG Course 3, 4, or 5	$15
Over the Net Volleyball	$24
Pete Rose Baseball	$9
PGA Tour Golf	$32
PGA Tour Golf Disk 1	$17
PGA Tour Golf Ltd Edt	$45
Pro Football Analyst	$34
Pro Tennis Tour 2	$32
RBI 2	$32
Reel Fish'n	$12
Road to the Final Four	$37
Serve & Volley	$12



'MICROLEAGUE FOOTBALL DELUXE' from **MICROLEAGUE SPORTS** is a realistic football simulation. You get 48 pro football rosters that you can form into leagues of up to 28 teams. Single-key playbook macros let you program plays for faster play. The computer coach picks offensive & defensive plays based on actual team stats and player stats, adjusting his game plan to your every move. **$39**

Skate or Die	$16
Skie or Die	$16
Speedball 2	$27
Sport of Kings	$18
Super Car Pack	$37
Tennis Cup	$32
Tie Break Tennis	$27
TKO Boxing	$6

IBM SPORTS

Tom Landry Football	$29
Tony LaRussa Basebll	$32
T LaRussa Stadiums	$15
T LaR Teams1901-68	$15
TV Sports Basketball	$12
TV Sports Football	$12
Weaver Baseball 1.5	$19
Weaver Commissioner	$16
Weaver 1988 - 1989 Ea	$16
Weaver Baseball 2.0	$32
Weaver Commisnr 2.0	$21
Weaver 2.0 1990 Teams	$16
World Class Soccer	$28
1990 Stats/Mngr Profils	$16
Weaver 2.0 Comm Edt	$59



'CARRIERS AT WAR' from **SSG** is WW2 carrier warfare. Explore Pearl Harbor, Santa Cruz, Coral Sea, Midway, Eastern Solomons, & Marianas Turkey Shoot. Great graphics and simulation. You must seek out the enemy carriers, fleets and aircraft before they find you. Hundreds of ships & aircraft are individually modeled. With point & click interface, 256 color VGA & sound board support. **$37**

HINT BOOKS

688 Attack Sub	$10
Altered Destiny	$10
Bard's Tale 1 - 3 Ea	$10
Buck Rogers 1 or 2	$10
Castle of Dr Brain	$10
Champions of Krynn	$10
Code Name Iceman	$10
Colonel Bequest 1 or 2	$10
Conquests of Camelot	$10
Conquests of Longbow	$10
Countdown	$10
Curse of Azure Bonds	$10
Death Knights of Krynn	$10
Dragons of Flame	$10
Drakkhen	$10

IBM AD & D

AD&D Bundle	$38
Champions of Krynn	$32
Curse of Azure Bonds	$32
Death Knights of Krynn	$32
Dragon Strike	$32
Dragons of Flame	$12
Eye of the Beholder	$32
Eye of the Beholder 2	$38
Gateway Savge Frontr	$32
Heroes of the Lance	$12
Pool of Darkness	$38
Pool of Radiance	$32
Secret of Silver Blades	$32
Shadow Sorcerer	$32
War of the Lance	$9

HINT BOOKS

Elvira 1 or 2	$10
Eye of Beholder 1	$10
Eye of Beholder 2	$12
Fountain of Dreams	$10
Free DC	$10
Gateway Savage Frntr	$10
Hard Nova	$10
Harpoon Battlebook	$19
Heart of China	$10
Hero's Quest 1 - 3 Ea	$10
Immortal	$10
Indy Jones Lst Crsade	$10
Indy Jones Fate Atlantis	$10
King's Quest 1 - 5 Ea	$10
Leisr Suit Larry 1 - 5 Ea	$10
Loom	$10
Lord of the Rings 1 or 2	$10
Magic Candle 1 or 2	$10
Manhunter NY or SF	$10
Maniac Mansion	$10
Martian Dreams	$13
Martian Memorandum	$10
Mean Streats	$10
Might & Magic 1 or 2	$10
Might & Magic 3	$16
Planet's Edge	$16
Police Quest 1 - 3 Ea	$10
Pool of Darkness	$12
Pool of Radiance	$10
Power Monger	$10
Puzzle Gallery	$10
Quest for Clues 2, 3 or 4	$21
Quest for Glory 1 - 3 Ea	$10
Railroad Tycoon	$10
Rise of the Dragon	$10
Run 5 Issue 1 - 20 Ea	$6
Savage Empire	$10
Search for the King	$10
Secret Mnky Islnd 1 or 2	$10
Secret of Silver Blades	$10
Shadow Sorcerer	$10
Simcity/Simearth	$20
Simearth	$19
Space Quest 1 - 4 Ea	$10
Starflight 1 or 2	$10
Strategy Plus 3 -11 Ea	$8
Strategy Plus 12-16	$4
Tunnels & Trolls	$10
Ultima 4 - 7 Ea	$10
Wizardry 6 Cosmic Frg	$12
Wizardry 7 Crusade	$12
Yeager's Air Combat	$19
Zak McKracken	$10

CHIPS & BITS CALL 800 -753 -GAME

IBM HARDWARE

Ad Lib Sound Card	$69
Ad Lib Gold Snd Crd	$199
Adlib Surround Sound	$59
Adlib Telephone Module	$59
Ad Lib MCA Snd Crd	$149
Ad Lib Visual Composr	$75
Ad Lib Speakers	$15

IBM ROLEPLAYING

Flames of Freedom	$29
Fountain of Dreams	$15
Hard Nova	$19
Hero's Quest 1	$21
Hero's Quest 2 or 3	$34
Hyperspeed	$37
Immortal	$27

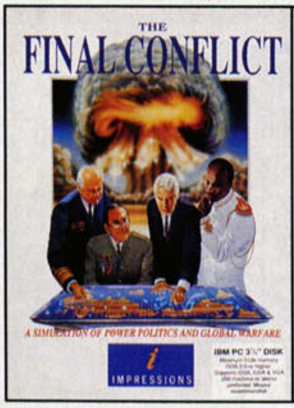


'COHORT' from **IMPRESSIONS** is an unusual wargame using a miniatures style interface to cover combat between roman legions & their enemies. Features animated combat & movement, 7 unit types, infantry, cavalry, & archers, user definable army composition, 4 different maps, scenario builder, stop & give orders real time combat, 256 color VGA, & sound board support. **$34**

Flight Stick	$43
Flight Stick w Falcon	$46
Maxx Control Yoke	$59
Rudder Peddals	$39
Mouse 3 Button	$29
Pro Audio Spectrum	$249
Sound Blaster	$109
Sound Blaster Pro	$199
Snd Blaster Speakers	$15
Snd Blaster Voice Edtr	$54
Sound Star Snd Board	$29
Thrustmaster Joystick	$79
Thrustmstr Weapn Cntrl	$79
Thunder Board SndBrd	$84
Thunder Board Spkrs	$15

IBM ROLE PLAYING

2400 AD	$28
Autoduel	$26
Bad Blood	$31
Bard's Tale 1	$15
Bard's Tale 2	$19
Bard's Tale 3	$31
Bard's Tale Cnstrctn St	$34
Battletech 1 or 2	$31
Blade Warrior	$12
Buck Rogers 1 or 2	$32
Captain Blood	$9
Captive	$30
CHARACTER EDITORS	$16
Conan	$32
Corporation	$32
Cybergenic Ranger	$32
Darklands	$39
Darkspyre	$32
Drakkhen	$37



'FINAL CONFLICT' from **IMPRESSIONS** is a strategy game of power politics & global warfare. Allocate resources. Build factories and control food production. Produce armies, tanks, ships, & missiles. Send out spies & conduct diplomacy to uncover military secrets & win allies. Features 95 countries, nuclear winter, optional arcade missile sequence, entirely icon driven. **$34**

Dragon Lord	$12
Dragon Wars	$31
Dusk of the Gods	$38
Earthling	$32
Elvira 1 Mistress Dark	$34
Elvira 2 Jaws Cerberus	$42
Escape from Hell	$17
Fire King	$7

Journey	$12
Keef the Thief	$16
Keys to Maramon	$19
King's Bounty	$19
Knights of Legend	$30
Lord of the Rings 1	$34
Lord of the Rings 2	$37
Loremaster	$39



'GEMINI JOYSTICK' from **A DAN AMERICA** is the first joystick for videogame machines and PCs. A Champ testing disk is included for checking PC configuration. Features include dual-axis trim adjusters for accurate and stable cursor control, high speed autofire, and auto-centering. One joystick switches between PC or the following: Turbo Grafx 16, Genesis, or Nintendo. **$24**

Magic Candle 1	$15
Magic Candle 2	$38
Mechwarrior	$34
Megatraveller 1	$19
Megatraveller 2	$34
Megatraveller 3	$37
Midwinter 1	$24
Midwinter 2	$29
Might & Magic 1	$12
Might & Magic 2	$17
Might & Magic 1, 2&HB	$33
Might & Magic 3	$38
Mines of Titan	$12
Murder	$29
Paladin	$28
Paladin Scrolls Disk	$16

IBM ROLEPLAYING

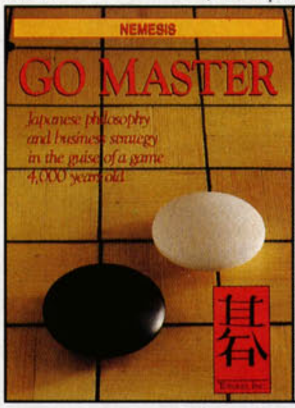
Phantasie 3	$12
Pirates	$9
Planet's Edge	$38
Prophecy 1	$12
Questron 2	$12
Rings of Medusa	$28
Scavengers	$34
Sentinal Worlds	$18
Shadowgate	$31
Sorcerian	$34
Space 1889	$19
Space Inc	$34
Space Rogue	$30
Space Wrecked	$32
Spirit of Excaliber	$29
Starflight 1 or 2	$19
Star Command	$34
Star Saga 1 or 2	$34
Sword of the Samurai	$9
Swrd Samrai & Pirates	$16
Tangled Tales	$21
Terran Envoy	$12
Third Courier	$9
Times of Lore	$28
Tunnels & Trolls	$12
Twilight 2000	$34
Ultima Martian Dreams	$37
Ultima Savage Empire	$34
Ultima Trilogy	$35
Ultima 4 or 5	$35
Ultima 6 False Prophet	$39
Ultima 7 Black Gate	$45
Ultima Stygian Abyss	$48
Uncharted Waters	$42
Vengeance of Excalibur	$32
Windwalker	$28
Wizardry Trilogy	$32
Wizardry 4	$19
Wizardry 5	$32
Wizardry 6 Cosmic Frg	$37
Wizardry 7 Crusaders	$39

IBM ACTION /ARCADE

Airborne Ranger	$12
Altered Beast	$28
Amazing Spiderman	$12
Arachnaphobia	$28
Arkanoid 2	$28
Armor Alley	$27
Artura	$6
Back to the Future 2	$24
Barbarian	$9
Batman	$28
Batman The Movie	$24
Battle Master	$37
Battlestorm	$32
Bill & Ted's Exclnt Adv	$19
Blockbuster	$6
Blockout	$28
Brain Blaster	$28
Bruce Lee Lives	$28
Budokan	$17
Colorado	$9
Continuum	$32
Crackdown	$19
Crossbow	$29
Dark Century	$29
Day of the Viper	$32
D Generation	$32
Dig Dug	$6

IBM ACTION /ARCADE

Double Dragon 2	$15
Dr Doom's Revenge	$12
Dragon's Lair 1 or 2	$38
Drgn's Lair Singe Cstl	$37
F40 Pursuit	$31
Faces Tetris 3	$25
Finale	$12



'NEMESIS GO VER 5' from **TOYOGO** is the ultimate computer GO program. With the simplicity of checkers and the complexity of chess, GO is both an enjoyable recreation and a serious strategy game. GO MASTER is a basic GO player and tutor. JOSEKI GENIUS adds complex corner openings. TACTICAL WIZARD is the ultimate tutor offering in depth tactical analysis. GO is 4000 years old. **$39**

Fire Power	$24
Freakn Funky Fuzzballs	$19
Galaxian	$6
Gauntlet 1 or 2	$9
Ghostbusters 2	$12
Golden Axe	$19
Gold of the Aztecs	$29
Grave Yardage	$12
Gremlins 2	$12
Guy Spy	$32
Harmony	$29
Hard Driving 2	$38
Home Alone	$27
Indy Jones Lst Crsade	$19
Knight Force	$31
Last Ninja 2	$24
Lemmings	$32
Light Quest	$32
Living Jigsaws	$9
Loopz	$24
Marble Madness	$15
Mavel Trilogy	$39
Miami Vice	$28
Monty Python	$15
Ms Pac Man	$9
Nevermind	$25
Night Breed	$15
Night Hunter	$25
Night Shift	$19
North & South	$27
Nova 9	$26
Obitus	$34
Obliterator	$6
Oil's Well	$21
Pac\ Man	$9



'HYPERSPEED' from **MICROPROSE** is a combination 3D space combat simulator and roleplaying game. Pilot a complex starship armed with fighters, kamikaze ships, plasma canon and remote probes. Conduct deep space diplomacy, negotiate with dozens of alien races, make alliances and treaties, each alien race responds according to its own customs and hidden agendas. **$39**

Paperboy	$27
Pick N Pile	$28
Pinball Construction	$9
Pipe Dream	$19
Powerdrift	$25
Powerdrome	$12
Psychic War	$28
Punisher	$12

IBM ACTION /ARCADE

Resolution 101	$24
Rocketeer	$32
Rotox	$24
Savage	$25
Silpheed	$21
Simpsons Arcade Game	$32
Space Ace 1 or 2	$37
Space Harrier	$28
Space Wars	$37
Speedball	$12
Speedball 2	$27
Stellar 7	$21
Stormlord	$15
Super Off Road	$15
Super Pac Man	$9



'DOLPHIN SAILING SIMULATOR' from **DOLPHIN MARINE SYSTEMS** is a realistic sailing adventure. You may choose from four different sailboats, raise or lower sails to adjust for wind conditions, view the area in cockpit or binocular view. Expand your system with the following voyage disks: San Francisco, Long Island, California, Vancouver, New England, Florida, Chicago. **$39**

Taking of Beverly Hills	$27
Targhan	$28
Teenage Mtnt Nnja Trtl	$24
Terminator	$34
Thexder 1 or 2	$21
Treasure Trap	$10
Troika	$19
Vaxine	$24
Viking Child	$32
Volfied	$27
Welltris Tetris 2	$24
Wild Streets	$31
Wrath of the Demon	$37
Xenocide	$19
X Men 1	$9
X Men 2	$25

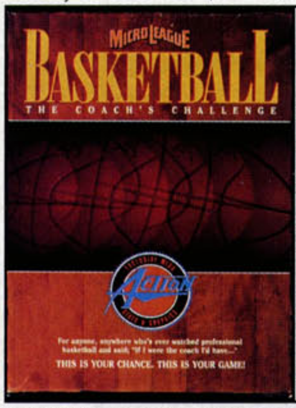
IBM SIMULATION

688 Attack Sub	$19
A10 Avenger	$43
A10 Tank Killer	$26
A10 Tank Killer 1.5	$34
Abrams Battle Tank	$12
Ace of Aces	$15
Aces of the Pacific	$39
Air Strike USA	$19
Appollo18	$28
Armor Geddon	$29
ATAC	$28
ATP	$37
Battle Command	$24
Battlehawks 1942	$21
Blue Max:Aces WW 1	$12
Cardinal of the Kremlin	$27
Carrier Command	$12
Conqueror Multi Tank	$27
Crash Course	$12
Das Boot Submarine	$19
Design yr own Railroad	$34
Echelon	$39
Elite Plus	$29
Eye of the Storm	$32
F117A Nighthawk	$42
F14 Tomcat	$28
F15 Strike Eagle	$7
F15 Strike Eagle 2	$29
F15 SE2 Scenario Disk	$17
F16 Combat Pilot	$16
F19 Stealth Fighter	$39
F29 Retaliator	$34
Falcon	$34
Falcon AT	$37
Falcon 3.0	$42
Flight of the Intruder	$32
Flight Simulator 4.0	$39
Aircraft Scenry Design	$35
Fly Grand Canyon 3D	$45
Galactic Conqueror Tank	$31
Gunboat	$33
Gunship	$12
Gunship 2000	$39
Harrier Combat Sim	$9
Heatwave	$25
Hoverforce	$31
Hunt for Red October	$22
Hyperspeed	$39
Instnt Facilities Locator	$28
Jet	$12
Jet Fighter 2.0	$39
Knights of the Sky	$29
LHX Attack Chopper	$26
Life & Death 1	$24
Life & Death 2	$32
Lightspeed 1	$29
M1 Tank Platoon	$39
Mantis Exprmntl Fghtr	$37
Mechwarrior	$34
Megafortress	$37
Megafortress Mission 2	$24
Miami Enforcer	$39
Mig 29 Fulcrum	$45
New Facilities Locator	$27
Power Boat Simulator	$39
PT 109	$15
Red Baron EGA	$34
Red Baron VGA	$36
Red Storm Rising	$12

IBM MAC & AMIGA GAMES FOR LESS

IBM SIMULATION

Resolution 101 $24
Rapcon $29
Sailing Instructor $199
Sailing Simulator $39
East Coast Voyages $39
West Coast Voyages $39
Scenery Collection A/B $37



'MICROLEAGUE BASKETBALL' from **MICROLEAGUE** is a realistic Basketball simulation. Features include full court scrolling graphics, pop-up screens for easy mid-game access to stats and substitutions, injury and fatigue factors, automatic stat compiler function, and a quick-play option. Expanded offensive & defensive options like, full court press, Double team, and Fast-Break. **$28**

Search for the Titanic $27
Secret Weapons Lftwff $45
S Weapons Expansion 1 $21
S Weapons Expansion 2 $21
Shuttle $37
Silent Service 1 $ 7
Silent Service 2 $34
Startrek 25th Aniversry $36
Stormovik $15
Strike Aces $32
Strike Commander $45
Stunt Driver $15
Stunt Track Racer $25
Stunts $31
Sublogic Scenery Disks $22
Tank $37
Team Yankee $36
Team Yankee 2 $32
Test Drive 2 $30
TD2 Callifornia Challng $15
TD2 European Challng $15
TD2 Muscle Cars $15
TD2 Super Cars $15
Test Drive 3 $32
TD3 Road & Car Disk $19
Their Finest Hour $37
TFH & BH1942 $38
Thunder Chopper $28
Thunderhawk $32
Thunderstrike $39
Tracon $34
Tracon 2 $29
Ultrabots $37
Vette $33
Virtual Reality Studio $49

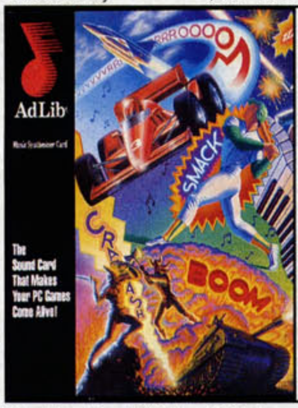


'FIRETEAM 2200' from **SIMSYSTEMS** is a strategy game of armoured combat in the far future. Fight alone or command up to 16 armoured units. Over 30 diffferent vehicles with 25 different weapons systems. Features adlib support, 15 scenarios, hidden movement, campaign game, datalink reports from vehicles in your command, line of sight tactical display, and play by modem. **$29**

Wing Commander 1 $39
WC1 Mission 1 or 2 $19
Wing Commander 2 $45
WC2 Op Module 1 or 2 $27
WC2 Speach Pack $15
Wolfpack $15
Yeager's Air Combat $38
Yeager's AFT 2.0 $19

AMIGA GAMES

688 Attack Sub $34
A10 Tank Killer $33
Action Stations $29
Armada 2525 $32
Armor Geddon $29
ATP $37
Bandit Kings A China $37
Bard's Tale 1 $18
Bard's Tale 2 $19
Bard's Tale 3 $34
Battlehawks 1942 $21
Battle Isle $32
Battle Tank Barbarosa $36
Battletech $34
Birds of Prey $32



The **'ADLIB'** music synthesizer card by **ADLIB INC** adds sound capability to hundreds of existing PC games. Using its 11 different FM synthesized voices, it can reproduce any sound. The standard audio jack allows you to plug in any headphone, boombox, or bookshelf speaker. The Adlib Juke Box playback program containing numerous pre-programmed compositions is also included. **$69**

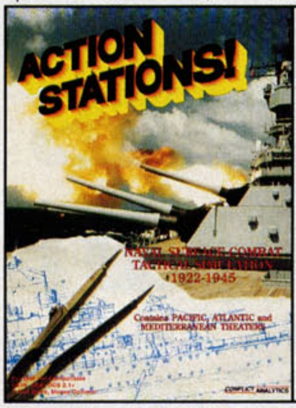
Blue Max:Aces WW I $34
Breach 2 $24
Breach 2 Scenario Disk $15
Buck Rogers $32
Centurion Dfndr Rome $34
Champions of Krynn $32
Code Name:Iceman $24
Cohort $34
Colonel's Bequest $24
Command HQ $39
Conan $32
Conquests of Camelot $24
Corporation $32
Curse of Azure Bonds $32
Days of Thunder $34
Death Knights of Krynn $32

AMIGA GAMES

Dragon Force $34
Dragon Strike $34
Dungeon Master $28
Elvira Mistress of Dark $34
Empire $33
Eye of the Beholder $39
Eye of the Storm $32
F15 Strike Eagle 2 $29
F19 Stealth Fighter $39
F29 Retaliator $34
FA18 Interceptor $18
Falcon $34
Falcon Mission Disk $18
Fire Brigade $35
Free DC $34
Gateway Savage Frntr $32
Genghis Khan $37
Gettysburg:Turn Point $37
Gunship $34
Halls of Montezuma $28
Harpoon $37
Harpoon Battle Sets $19
Harpoon Editor $27
Heart of China $34
Heatwave $28
Hound of Shadow $28
Immortal $34
Imperium $26
Indy Jones Adventure $24
Kampfgruppe $37
King's Quest 1 - 3 Ea $29
King's Quest 4 $34
Leisure Suit Lrry 1-5Ea $34
Lemmings $32
Loom $21
Lost Admiral $34
Lost Patrol $34
M1 Tank Platoon $39
Manhunter NY or SF $29
Megafortress $38
Midwinter $28
Might & Magic 2 $38
Might & Magic 3 $38
Nobunaga's Ambition $37
Nova 9 $21
Nuclear War $34
Overrun $39
Perfect General $34
Planet of Lust $28
Police Quest 1 $29
Police Quest 2 $34
Pool of Radiance $34
Pools of Darkness $38
Populous $34
Populous 2 $38
Powermonger $34
Railroad Tycoon $34
Red Barron $34
Red Storm Rising $30
Riders of Rohan $39
Rise of the Dragon $34
Romanc 3 Kngdm 1or2 $42
Rorke's Drift $34
Rules of Engagement $39
Sci Mutant Priestess $31
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TITLE:	Riders of Rohan
SYSTEMS:	IBM, Amiga
PRICE:	$49.95
PUBLISHER:	Konami Buffalo Grove, IL

Riders of the Video Mage

Konami's Riders of Rohan

by Allen L. Greenberg

An intriguing quality of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy is that it refuses to be confined. That is, it cannot be summarized, adapted, reworked or otherwise carried from print to some other medium without first having certain plot branches either pruned or altogether removed. **Konami**'s *Riders of Rohan* (*Riders*) very likely represents the first time in Middle Earth that the tree has been pruned away in order to display a *single* branch. It portrays the story of King Theoden and his struggle with the traitorous wizard Saruman. Hence, it represents the most lengthy passage of *The Lord of the Rings* which does not deal directly with the more spiritual and weighty matter of the evil ring.

The graphic touches in *Riders of Rohan* are simple, yet pleasing. Both the animated and still screens are presented using the same soft watercolor hues with which J.R.R. Tolkien enjoyed painting. Unfortunately, from a gamer's perspective, the minuscule figures that occupy the battlefield during some sequences and the master map of Rohan in others are very difficult to locate and select when the player needs to act quickly. Overall, however, the game has a satisfying look.

Rider's creators have produced a most faithful recreation of a scene from Middle Earth, although its value as a game is another matter to consider. Essentially, *Riders* is a lightweight strategy game that includes several action sequences and some very limited character interaction. Those who have not read the trilogy will probably have a difficult time understanding the events which have led up to those in the game. However, the events that unfold *within* the game are simple enough to follow.

Libretto

In the game, the kingdom of Rohan is under attack from the west by the wizard Saruman. The player directs the forces opposed to Saruman, although not all of these are available to the player as the game begins. Several bands of "Riders" patrol the River Isen, across which Saruman's armies of Orcs and Dunlendings are marching. At the fortress of Helm's Deep, groups of soldiers prepare for a siege. King Theoden remains at his home in Edoras, under the spell of the vile Grima Wormtongue, refusing to mobilize the remaining Riders. In Fangorn Forest, Ents — those mighty personified trees of Middle Earth — need only be

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pointed in the proper direction to vent their anger against the evil wizard. Finally, the remaining members of the broken Fellowship — Gandalf, Aragorn, Gimli, Legolas, Merry and Pippin — are each about to take part in the approaching confrontation.

So, the majority of *Riders of Rohan* is concerned with individual battles between the game's title characters and Saruman's armies. In each case, the Riders are greatly outnumbered and the player must use strategy to survive. This strategy, as suggested by both the classic trilogy and the game's documentation, involves using light cavalry and infantry to distract the enemy while the heavy cavalry gets ready to charge. For these battles, the screen switches from its normal view of the map of Rohan to a close-up of the battlefield. The battles take place in real time, although the action will freeze long enough for the player to input his commands to each unit. Using either mouse or keyboard, the player places the pointer on the tiny on-screen figure representing the unit he/she wishes to address. Clicking on that figure gives access to a menu of commands. This means that the player has to click on units incessantly throughout the battle in order to monitor their progress. The battle ends when either the player or the enemy issues the retreat command.

Battle may sometimes be preceded by one of the game's arcade sequences, in which leaders of the two forces agree to a duel to the death. Using mouse or keyboard, the player controls the full-screen figure in both attack and defensive moves. The army belonging to the deceased leader will then suffer from low morale during the ensuing battle. The player also has a "quick battle" option in which the computer automatically generates the results of the confrontation without any input from the player.



Cast of Characters

In combat, there exist no more intimidating fighters than the Ents, who handle their enemies much as a modern-day lawnmower treats grass. It is important that the Ents become active early in the game because they move very slowly and unless they are on the battlefield, their movements are not under the player's control. The hobbits Merry and Pippin may activate the Ents if they have been freed from the Orcs, or the job may fall to Gandalf — the renowned wizard who has returned fresh from the bowels of a mountain, wearing a new set of clothes.

Any army which has Gandalf as part of its company will enjoy the benefit of having a list of spells at its disposal. The player controls which spells will be cast, but will quickly discover that overuse of the good wizard's magical prowess will not only exhaust the wizard, but will also attract the attention of the dread Sauron in Mordor. Upon discovering Gandalf's potent intervention on behalf of the forces of good, Sauron will promptly dispatch one of his demonic Nazgul, mounted on a flying serpent, to investigate. This, in turn, leads to Gandalf fighting the hellish creature in the game's second arcade sequence. Floating in the air like a medieval version of the "Rocketeer," the wizard trades lightning bolts with his foe until one of the two manages to microwave the other.

Aragorn's purpose in Rohan is to remove King Theoden from the paralyzing influence of Grima Wormtongue. There is some brief character interaction in which the player has only a small part in deciding how Aragorn responds to certain questions at Theoden's home. On the road, Aragorn, Gimli and Legolas will frequently be ambushed by Orcs, leading to the same arcade dueling sequence as the one which occasionally precedes the army battles. Fortunately, Aragorn is a master swordsman and any orc challenging him might just as well challenge Michael Jackson to a moon-walk competition.

The final arcade sequence involves archery, and frequently occurs as the enemy gathers at the fortress of Helm's Deep. The player directs an archer shooting at oncoming enemies who must be hit as they come into range. The enemy will be throwing spears as they approach and the archer must duck down or be impaled. Legolas the elf may also engage in a similar sequence while traveling through Rohan, although his shafts are apparently AIM-9M "Sidewinder" arrows of elven manufacture.

Rohan will eventually receive a message from Gondor requesting the assistance which the Riders are pledged to give. If the player has been defeated by Saruman, if too few of the Riders remain alive to assist Gondor or if any of the powerful members of the Fellowship have been killed, the game is lost. If the Riders are able to fulfil their commitment, the player will win.

Opening Night Notices

In a very real sense, then, a player's performance is judged by how closely he or she has followed events from the Tolkien canon. Thus, seasoned strategists and wargamers may find themselves unhappy with the restrictions under which they must achieve victory. Likewise, many will find the battle sequences repetitious, since they constantly feature similar units facing similar enemies under similar disadvantages. So, oddly enough, the arcade sequences in *Riders of Rohan* end up being the most interesting parts of the game, even though the game appears to have been designed primarily as a strategy game.

Perhaps, there is a limit to how many different game products Tolkien's famous trilogy should be expected to inspire. One cannot help but survey the large number of software titles which are based on *The Lord of the Rings* and wonder if they are, in actuality, a tribute to the diversity of Tolkien's work or simply a reflection of the power of a successful license? Are such games a recognition that Tolkien's Middle Earth touched archetypal symbols and emotions (such that gamers are continually drawn back to Tolkien's vision) or are they an indictment of the repetitious nature of current game design?

Such questions may be as unanswerable as whether books should be made into films, films into television series or films, television series, books or comic books into computer games. Ultimately, it depends upon the artistic implementation in each product.

As for *Riders of Rohan*, there is little to hold the interest of experienced strategy players and wargamers and too few of the arcade sequences to challenge the dedicated action gamer. However, it is likely that many devotees of Tolkien will enjoy this faithful approach to one of Middle Earth's most memorable battles and the characters who participated in it. **CGW**


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Shadow Sorcerer

Fantasy Action-Adventure

by Todd

What's a player to do? After battling against overwhelming forces in the temple of Xak Tsaroth, then risking injury and death in pursuit of the mystical Disks of Mishakal, Champions of Krynn were able to both recover the magical Disks and restore faith in the True Gods of Legend. After that, the "Champions" journeyed from Xak Tsaroth to the fortress of Pax Tharkas and rescued hundreds of peaceful men, women and children who were being held captive by the evil Lord Verminaard and his vile Draconian guards. After such incredible adventures, what can a player do for an encore?

In *Shadow Sorcerer* (*Shadow*), an action game that continues the **DragonLance** series set in the world of Krynn, players who are not predisposed *against* action games should find their opportunity for a successful encore. Continuing the storyline established in *Heroes of the Lance* and *Dragons of Flame*, *Shadow* adds a completely new graphics style and control system that represents, in this reviewer's opinion, a big step forward in playability for *AD&D* action games.

The More Things Change...

Like the earlier action games and unlike the role-playing "Gold Box" series, combat occurs in real time. In contrast to the earlier games, *Shadow* allows the player to control not one, but four, on-screen characters simultaneously. Through the use of an iconic interface, players can quickly and easily issue commands to their on-screen surrogates with a mouse. Keyboard and joystick input are also supported, but using the mouse is so intuitive that *Shadow* seems to have been specifically designed with a mouse in mind.

Shadow's graphics represent an equally radical departure from previous efforts. During play, the game operates in two modes: wilderness view and tactical view. The former is a rather standard hex map showing roads, hills, mountains, forests and the like for the lands between Pax Tharkas (to the north) and Thorbardin in the south. A small golden icon (which, strangely enough, resembles nothing so much as the Oscar statuette of Hollywood fame) represents the player's party, while a similar silver icon represents the refugees' party (or parties, as we'll see later). Players move along through the wilderness view, slowly crossing the countryside. Then, when an encounter occurs, play switches to the tactical view.

The tactical view employs isometric graphics to simulate a realistic 3-D perspective for both exterior and interior/dungeon locales. (For readers unfamiliar with the term, the screen is "tilted" at a 45-degree angle — this effect has been used skillfully in games like *Zaxxon* and the more recent *Zany Golf* and *The Immortal.*) The tactical view graphics, in VGA mode, are lush and colorful, and manage to impart a realistic sense of "being there" (albeit from a fly-on-the-wall viewpoint). Characters (both the party and NPCs) move smoothly, and some of the special effects (especially Magic Missile and Fireball spells) are impressive. Realistic sound effects (from this reviewer's **AdLib** card) also add to the realism of the game environment, and are worth noting.

...The More They Stay the Same

While most of *Shadow* makes sense and contributes to an enjoyable gaming experience, there are some aspects of the game which are infuriatingly illogical. By far the worst of these is the matter of the player's interaction with the refugees from the fortress of Pax Tharkas. In the fiction of the game, players are asked to believe that the role-playing characters have just escaped from this fortress of death, against awesome odds, and that an army of deadly, bloodthirsty creatures is hot on the party's (and thus the refugees') trail. In short, the only logical action to take is to flee.

Yet players will often find themselves contending with refugees who, through an impromptu governing Council, may decide to give up on Thorbardin altogether and high-tail it back to Pax Tharkas, *where certain death awaits!* The manual concedes that the refugees can become more than a minor irritant to the

Shadow Sorcerer



Gets a New Look

Threadgill

TITLE:	Shadow Sorcerer
SYSTEM:	IBM, Amiga
REVIEWED:	IBM
PRICE:	$49.95
PROTECTION:	None
DESIGNERS:	Jeff Groteboer George MacDonald
PUBLISHER:	Strategic Simulations, Inc. Sunnyvale, CA

player and offers rationalizations for their often bizarre behavior. However, the game is won and lost upon the refugees' safety and having them suddenly turn against the player makes the game needlessly frustrating.

Combat in the tactical mode often hinges upon character placement and this is another sore point. The iconic interface allows the player to easily command characters to move to specific places on the screen. Usually, the characters act immediately on the command and move to the indicated square. Quite often during a heated battle, however, the characters may be bunched together and/or blocked by rocks or plants which prove to be an insurmountable challenge for them to navigate around. So, the characters stay put, often with fatal consequences. After witnessing this AI failure a few too many times, one cannot help but think that some more programming time on the character AI routines would have geometrically improved player satisfaction.

Words of Wisdom (Hints)

Readers wishing to avoid hints please skip ahead to the next section.

Time can be one's greatest enemy in *Shadow*. While the Draconians leave Pax Tharkas 48 hours after the party's departure, the wilderness is very large and there is much to do. There simply isn't enough time to figure out where everything is, perform all the necessary actions and lead the refugees to Thorbardin in one fell swoop.

Clever gamers will take advantage of a few "false starts" to map out the wilderness and the various dungeons before actually *playing* the game and giving it full effort. After all, the players are already supposed to know *something* about this wilderness, according to the fiction. Then, once the maps have been made and notes have been taken, it is much easier to "sweep through" to a successful conclusion.

There are some time-wasting elements in the game's overall design. For example, in order to reach Thorbardin, the Companions must pass through Skullcap, a large dungeon located at the southernmost edge of the map. Before they will be able to make it through Skullcap, they will need to make the acquaintance of a certain wizard (only with his physical presence in the party is Skullcap passable). Unfortunately, his hangout in the wilderness is somewhat off the southward path one feels compelled to take. In short, it pays to explore everything ahead of time so less time is wasted when it *really* counts.

Remember that the refugees' well-being is the key to success in *Shadow Sorcerer*. At the start of the game, the refugees have enough food to last a couple of days and after that they'll need more in order to continue the journey. (Lack of food is a major contributor to the refugees' contrary behavior mentioned above and is to be avoided at all costs.) There's plenty of food around in the wilderness, but you'll have to find it. Too bad rations don't grow on trees....

Gamers should also avoid making a habit of switching back and forth between the wilderness and tactical displays, since each time the tactical display is exited, a half-hour of game time passes (whether anything actually happened in the tactical mode or not).

Of course, one should always keep an eye on the party's health and well-being. Healing is only possible when a cleric is in the party and, in turn, the party is in tactical mode. So, it is a good idea to keep a cleric on hand. It is *not*, however, a good idea to heal too often. Healing eats up precious time.

Final Observations

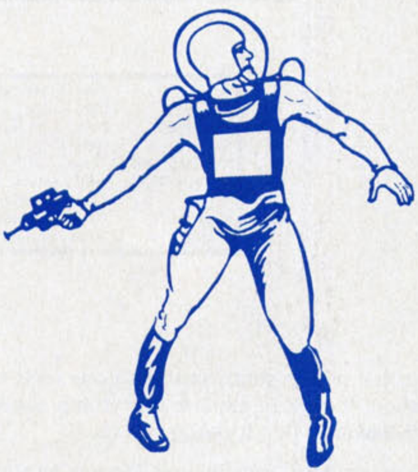
Shadow Sorcerer is apparently aimed at gamers who are new to fantasy games in general and the **DragonLance** milieu in particular. The storyline presents a welcome change from (to borrow a phrase from one particularly well-regarded writer) the overplayed "Kill Foozle the Mad Wizard" scenarios. Graphics and sound are top-notch, with a style and flair that holds the player's interest and keeps him or her wondering just what is around that next corner.

New and moderately-experienced players alike should enjoy *Shadow Sorcerer*, although the refugees and combat movement difficulties may be more than some novices may wish to contend with. Experienced gamers will probably find little challenge here, but might find the game enjoyable as a diversion from the greater challenges of the "Gold Box" series. Small problems aside, *Shadow Sorcerer* is a welcome improvement to the previous action releases in the series and yet another refinement to a gaming system that is showing remarkable versatility. **CGW**

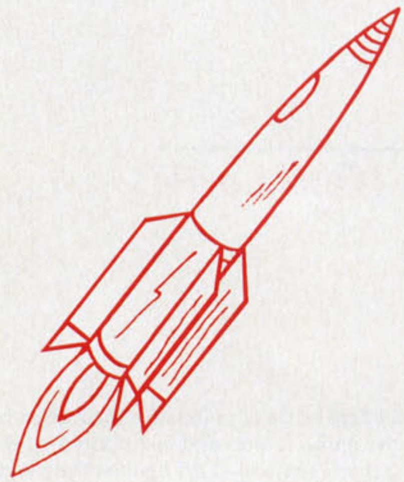
Back to Basics

Better Games' Stellar Agent

by Charles Ardai



TITLE:	Stellar Agent
SYSTEM:	IBM
PRICE:	$35.00
DESIGNER:	Robert Kraus
PUBLISHER:	Better Games P.O. Box 7644 Chicago, IL 60680 (312) 588-0795



Anyone who likes text adventures and wants to find new ones to play has the devil's own time doing it these days. No one makes them any more — practically no one, anyway — so a dedicated texthound has to choose between scouring the back shelves of computer stores for unsold relics, playing *Spellcasting 201* with the graphics turned off or waiting patiently for **Mediagenic** to actually release the *Lost Treasures of Infocom* package they have been promising for ages. Fortunately, there is now a fourth choice. One can send away to **Better Games** for a copy of *Stellar Agent.*

Stellar Agent, like Paul McCartney's "Liverpool Oratorio" and the electoral college system, is a living anachronism. It is a brand-spanking-new text adventure that looks, feels, and plays like a piece of adventure game history. There are no graphics and there is no parser. One chooses one's actions from numbered menus. The screen is divided into sections labeled "Location," "Description," "Current Situation" and the like.

The storyline is so loose that it makes *Zork*'s "Collect ten treasures" plot look like *War and Peace*. It is as though a state-of-the-art game from 1977 had fallen into a time warp, only to emerge a decade and a half later, blissfully oblivious to the technical and aesthetic advances it had missed in the intervening years. *Stellar Agent* is more than rough around the edges — it is rough everywhere one looks.

Stellar Performance

However, unpolished as it is, *Stellar Agent* also recalls the *best* of the early adventure game era: ingenious logic puzzles; multi-stage death traps; a robust and shameless mixing of science fiction, high fantasy and anything else that caught the designer's fancy; and, best of all, the anything-goes atmosphere of discovery and fun that characterized such classics as *Starcross* and the original *Adventure*. The game is really no more than a collection of puzzles which are loosely strung together. To the designer's credit, however, the puzzles are fine examples of their type and, to the delight of this puzzle-hungry player, there are a *ton* of them. Some of them are the kind of puzzle one doesn't see too often any more. Early in the game, for instance, the player has to unlock a vault by pushing eight buttons in a sequence that will turn off eight lights. Each button reverses the current state of one or more of the lights, the complication being that the buttons only function when their corresponding lights are on. (This puzzle is not very difficult, but it is clever.) A later puzzle requires the player to destroy fifteen robots, each carrying three different bombs, with just four uses of a bomb detonator. These puzzles will remind players with long memories of such **Infocom** favorites as the royal maze in *Zork III* and the rock-chase sequence in *Spellbreaker*. *Stellar Agent*'s logic puzzles are no less derivative of familiar archetypes than **Infocom**'s were, but neither are they any less enjoyable as a result.

Stellar Agent also offers more conventional adventure game puzzles, and these, too, are ingenious. How to get past a lightning-fast monster with several elephant-like trunks? Try eating a fruit that makes the eater smell awful. Hungry rats are barring one's passage across a plain? Try scattering a handful of poisonous berries on the ground. There are five planets' worth of both types of puzzles to solve as the player picks his way through a quest to uncover something called the "Info-Prism" before a bunch of nasty aliens do. For what it is worth, this is the game's storyline; it is fed to the player as quickly and sketchily as possible at the beginning of the game and then vanishes for long stretches at a time as one passes from sequence to sequence.

One could argue that a game like *Stellar Agent* really doesn't need a storyline, and one would probably be right. As it is, the game practically ignores the one it has. The game's structure could hardly be called linear, since the player can use his spaceship to jump from planet to planet at will. One does have

to accomplish certain things before one can accomplish certain other things, however, so some of the player's apparent freedom is an illusion.

As a result, a good deal of backtracking is necessary as one makes fatal mistakes and then goes back to correct them. The game is full of dead ends and, in fact, it is impossible to get to the end without dying and restoring several times. Fortunately, the game has the most comprehensive Restore function this reviewer has ever seen, permitting the player to restore to almost any moment he chooses. This ability makes the game's requisite trial and error almost painless. In addition, the game is divided into seven "stages," and when one completes a stage, the game tells the player so. One never has to backtrack further than the beginning of the current stage.

Stellar Agent actually improves on the early adventure games it resembles in that it is far less frustrating than they were. For one thing, the menu-driven interface acts as a built-in hint system — when the choice "throw berries" appears alongside the expected "eat berries," it gives one an idea of what one is supposed to do, though not where or when one is supposed to do it. Because of this and the user-friendly restore function, players will be able to go through the game with a minimum of tooth-grinding and hair-tearing. The game is not always easy, but where it is difficult, it is difficult in the best possible way: it challenges the player's *wits*, not his patience.

Stellar Limitations

Stellar Agent is an acquired taste, obviously, and this writer fears that it is a taste one has to have acquired years ago. Today's gamers may have little patience with it unless there is already a soft spot in their hearts for the Golden Age of Adventure Games that it represents. It doesn't help that the game's descriptions rarely evoke more than the bare bones of a setting — "The Commander's office contains the usual office furnishings," for example — or that the menu commands are sometimes abbreviated to the point of absurdity. (For instance, there is the command "Purple alien," which turns out to mean "Talk to the purple alien.") Other quirks, such as the player's inability to drop anything, may turn some players off as well.

On the other hand, players for whom the lure of a good puzzle is enough to make them put up with a mulligan stew of a plot — throw in some cavemen, some robots, some jungle tribes — will find in *Stellar Agent* a game unlike anything else on the market. Players willing to grin and bear a text game peppered with such misspellings as "wierd," "guage," "extention," "viscious," and "lagre" (for "large") will find quite a lot to enjoy. To expect finesse and polish from **Better Games** would be unfair; they are a new company, and, to date, *Stellar Agent* is their only title. What one can expect, and what the game delivers in spades, is the infectious enthusiasm of a new talent in the field of adventure game writing. The tragedy, of course, is that this is a dead field. There is no longer an **Infocom** for Robert Kraus to go work for now that he has demonstrated his abilities. Nor is there a wide audience for the kind of work he is doing. For those of us who remain, however, *Stellar Agent* is a perfect reminder of what we used to love so much. **CGW**

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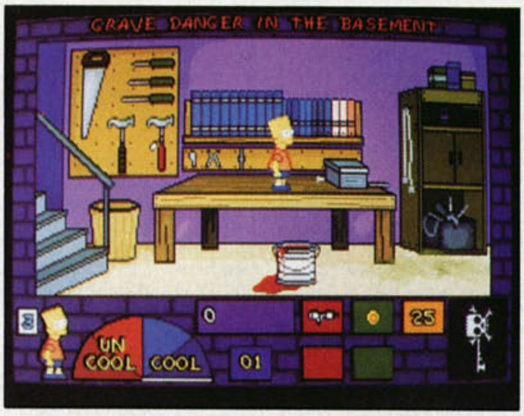
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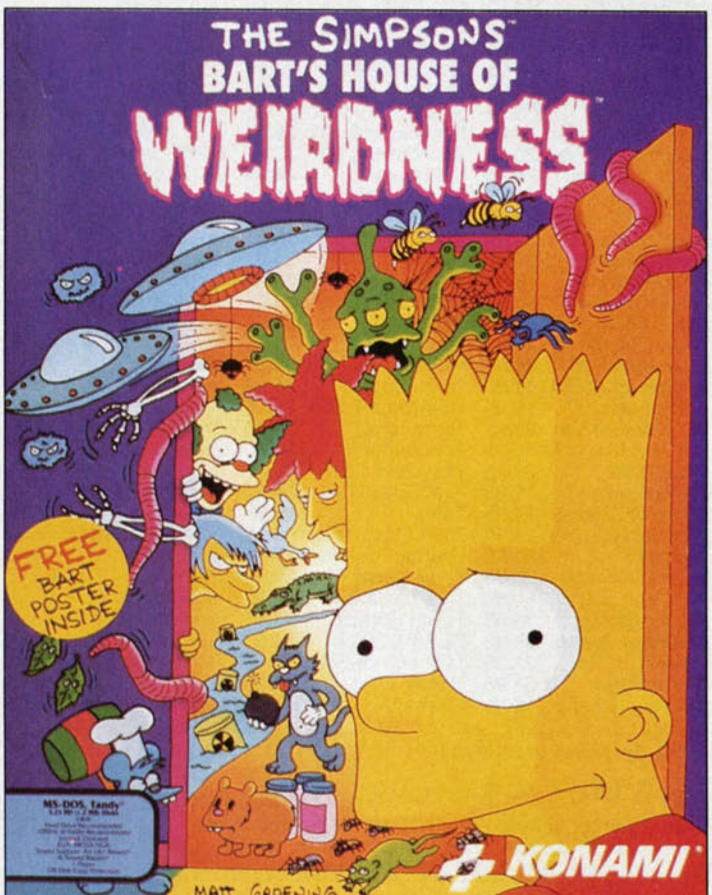
Circle Reader Service #89

If Coolness Were Soul, Bart Would Be James Brown

Konami's The Simpsons: Bart's House of Weirdness

by Charles Ami





TITLE:	The Simpsons: Bart's House of Weirdness
SYSTEM:	IBM
PRICE:	$49.95
PROTECTION:	Document Look-Up
DEVELOPER:	Distinctive Software, Inc.
PUBLISHER:	Konami Buffalo Grove, IL

Request from Bart Simpson to the editor of *Computer Gaming World*: *May I please, sir, dispense with some of the high standards normally associated with* CGW*'s writing in order to talk about* Bart's House of Weirdness*? After all, you can't talk about a family lacking any laudable values unless you relax a few of your own.*

Reviewer: *Gee, Johnny, the kid's got a point!*

Bart: *Okay, man. I really like this game. I really think you should buy it. Buy it a lot. I give it five out of five on being a good game; five out of five on coolness; five out of five on...*

Editor: *BAAAARRRRTT!*

"Some Day I'll Kill That Kid!"

Bart Simpson, of course, enjoys a well-deserved reputation for provoking outbursts such as this from those unfortunate enough to have to deal with him. **Konami**'s *The Simpsons: Bart's House of Weirdness* provides television's most popular animated terrorist-in-training with a new method of generating such screams. In this arcade game, clearly aimed at the Simpsons' younger admirers, Bart must survive several adventures in his home, his neighborhood and — heaven help him — his mind. The game is essentially a run, jump and shoot-'em-up, but contains some original touches interesting enough to make the program worth noticing.

"Go To Your Room!"

Bart, always in his element when in "deep, deep trouble," has been sent to his room by his parents for crimes that are too unspeakable to document. In his room is stored some innocent play-time paraphernalia, along with a few embarrassing snapshots, of which his parents are obviously unaware. The bedroom will be Bart's home base during the game, where he will be able to rest and chill out — a very necessary procedure if Bart is to survive. Just as important, this is where a game in progress may be saved (specifically, in Bart's underwear drawer with the other contraband), a welcome feature which is too rare among arcade games.

It is obvious that Bart is not going to stay put. A door leading to a stairway gives him access to the attic where, hidden between the trunks and the painting of Marge Simpson, squadrons of belligerent bees wait to attack. Armed initially with a "burp-gun" and a limited number of burps, Bart will encounter more difficult enemies as he goes deeper into the attic. Also hidden in the mess are cans of spray-paint which make for more formidable, though shorter-lasting, weapons. The hero will usually have two different weapons at any time from which to choose.

Don't Lose Your Cool

Each time Bart is attacked by the creatures, he loses some of his "cool," as clearly indicated by the "cool-o-meter" located at the bottom of the screen. When this meter reaches its limit, Bart lays down on the floor in a fit of "toastification" and loses one of the three lives with which he started the game. In his travels, Bart may come across a photo of himself through which he will gain an extra life. Even more valuable are the many doughnuts which he will also come across. Mold notwithstanding, their medicinal



5
6
7
8

value in helping Bart regain some of his cool make them worth finding.

Along with his weapon and "cool" status, the bottom of the screen indicates the object for which Bart is searching. Once he finds the object, Bart may instantly transport back to his room and the safety of the game-save option. Some of the unused weapons with which Bart finishes one section of the game will then be available for use in other parts of the program.

Beware of Dustbunnies

In addition to the attic, Bart must also explore the basement, which contains deadly lint-balls floating from the laundry and some family skeletons that refuse to stay in the closet. Outside his window, Bart will engage in a treetop-to-sewer search for his baby sister's rubber ball. Also outside, he must attempt to gather enough money to buy a ticket to the movies. An amusing sequence here involves Bart destroying an intruder-prevention system at the home of his father's thoroughly disagreeable boss.

Bartman to the Rescue

Within Bart's closet are two further adventures which likely reflect the nature of the hero's imagination. In one adventure, Bart tracks space mutants who threaten the planet Earth, although not very seriously. The game's most challenging and whimsical episode occurs as Bart enters an "Itchy and Scratchy" cartoon. The insane hatred which those two cartoon-within-a-cartoon characters have for each other is so intense, it makes one wonder whether a PG rating would not be inappropriate. The violence is terrifying and rarely have mundane items been put to such diabolic use.

Bart's reward for surviving these six adventures is to have access to one final quest. About this, little may be revealed, except that it involves the rescue of Krusty the Clown — the foulest personality on children's television.

The game contains an amazing "VCR" mode which allows players to review their actions backward, forward or even one frame at a time. Favorite sequences may be saved and actually incorporated into the game's opening credits.

"Come Here, Boy"

Graphically, *House of Weirdness* very much resembles *The Simpsons* TV show. This is hardly surprising in that the weekly series itself uses very simple artwork, but the result is nonetheless effective. The program also includes music taken from the show, as well as digitized samples of the demonic delinquent's famous voice. The game supports Tandy, EGA and VGA graphics, as well as Ad Lib, Roland and Sound Blaster cards. A joystick is optional, though this reviewer found it to be unevenly responsive during play.

House of Weirdness stands up as well as any "Super-Marioid" arcade game, but its greatest appeal will be for those who also enjoy *The Simpsons* on television. Of course, Bart Simpson thinks even more highly of it, but he, one must remember, is a kid. "Kids" in the words of the self-styled philosopher Homer Simpson, "say such stupid things." **CGW**

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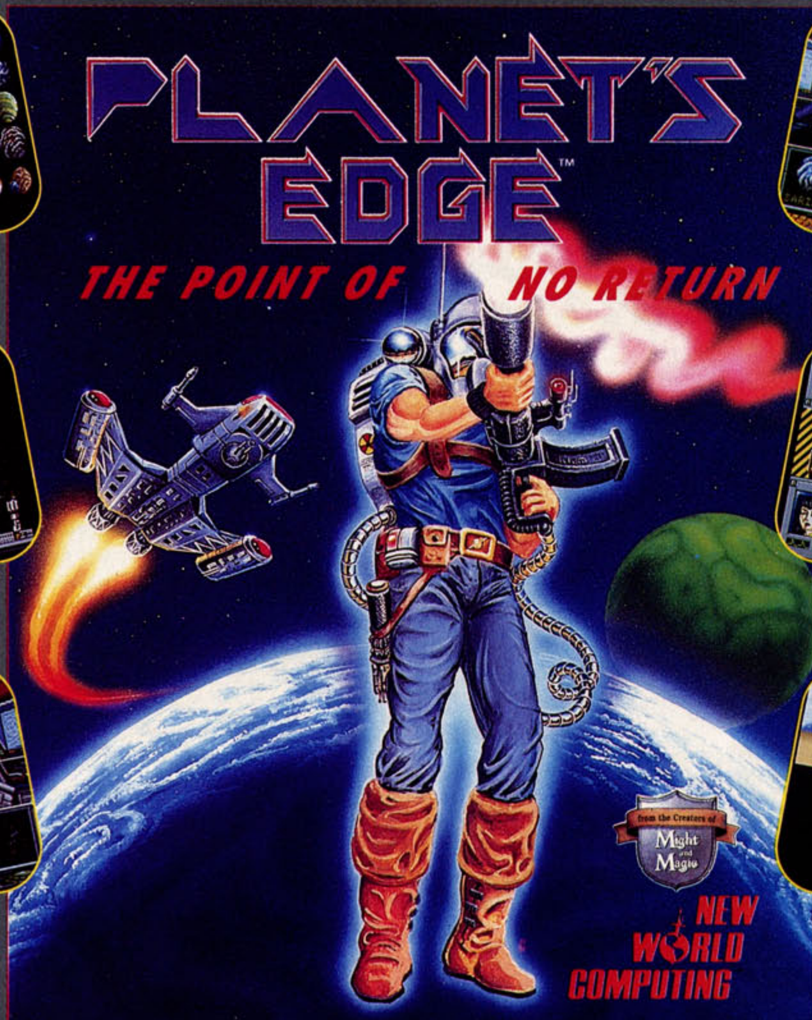
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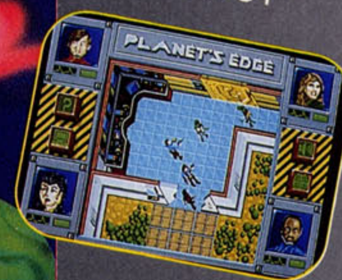


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Circle Reader Service #68



Letters From Paradise

Just Released

As a reader who has read your magazine since the days in which issue numbers had decimal points, you do an outstanding job. However, the little game summary square in which you give title, system, designer, publisher, etc. is nice, but as a diehard Amiga owner, it would be nice if the system line or, in "Taking A Peek," the machine availability listed my favorite machine. Often, the Amiga version is out and your magazine makes no mention of it. You seem quite "privy" to inside information and release dates.

P. Dennis Jones
Placentia, CA

The "Systems" line has been a source of frustration to us for many years. Yes, we are privy to "release dates" for various conversions, but the odds of such conversions actually hitting those release dates are less than overwhelming. It is a "Catch 22" situation. (Remember Joseph Heller's novel about WWII bomber pilots, in which they could go home if they were crazy — but they were not considered crazy if they actually did want to go home?) If we print that a game is available for the Amiga because we were told at press time that it would be out in 45 days or so and that conversion is delayed, we are castigated by the readership for cruelly hoaxing game-hungry Amiga owners. If we do not print that the game is available (in order to avoid that cruel hoax), the game comes out and we are accused of being anti-Amiga (and most of us on the editorial staff are Amiga owners and proud of it!). We list the conversions in "Conversions Received" whenever we have the actual *conversion in hand.* Those *are real!*

Politically Suspect

I found a section of your recent Sneak Preview of *Sid Meier's Civilization* very disappointing. The section in question is the discussion of the game's "politically correct" philosophy. I'll start out by eliminating any suspicion: I do consider myself to be politically liberal (gasp of horror from the back row), and, as such, hold many "politically correct" views, but I, in no way, shape, form or fashion, hold with the "PC" idea that only those views should be tolerated. With that out of the way, I'll get into the meat of this letter. Incidentally, all my assumptions about the game are based upon your (otherwise excellent) Preview.

You started out the section in question by referring to the game's use of the greenhouse effect, questioning whether this theory is valid. I'll give you that one. While I personally tend to agree with that particular idea, I realize that its acceptance is hardly universal. In game terms, though, it does add some encouragement for the player to deal with pollution. I certainly don't think you're going to argue that pollution isn't a problem that shouldn't be addressed in a game of the type discussed. I'll even agree that it shouldn't be the overriding issue for a modern society. Overpopulation is another possibility, as is warfare. I'll wait until I see the game to decide on that issue, though.

The next comment, though, is where the preview started to get to me. According to the article, the game's introduction refers to evolution. Your response was that, at least, that theory had been around a while. The tone of that, in my opinion, seemed to be rather snide. If you don't believe in Darwin's theories, fine; that's your right and privilege. But taking an item that appears solely in the game's introduction and using it to prove your charge of the game being concerned about "PC-ness" is unfair.

In regard to the last two items, I also wonder why you have never criticized these two items in other previous games. *SimEarth*, for instance, includes both (evolution in particular), but I don't remember the game being condemned. Is this some new editorial philosophy?

The final item in the Preview, however, was the one that inspired me to write. According to the article, the game includes women's suffrage. That's all well and good. But I hardly think listing giving women the right to vote qualifies as being PC! And I certainly hope that you didn't mean to imply that women's suffrage wasn't a great accomplishment! If you intended only to criticize the game's apparent idea that super-highways are necessary for women's suffrage, I'll accept that argument, but that wasn't the feeling the discussion left me with.

Don't misunderstand me. I'm not asking you to leave your own political views out of the magazine. Indeed, I realize that avoiding them completely in a commentary-oriented format such as yours would be well near impossible. But, in a review, that should focus purely on the game's entertainment value, I feel that politics should be left out. You have a monthly page of editorials; place the commentary there. I would not have found the material I've discussed here so inappropriate had it been in the form of an editorial. I still would not have agreed with it, but I wouldn't have objected to its placement.

All criticism aside, your magazine is easily the finest computer entertainment magazine on the market. Keep up the good work, but keep it apolitical.

Arthur C. Adams
Ellicott City, MD

Just as a film reviewer would be remiss not to point out the historical repercussions of taking, say, Oliver Stone's JFK *at face value, we believe that game reviewers (or in the present case, previewers) should consider the consequences of taking a game's presuppositions at face value. Part of the reason the editorial staff bothers to*

Dusk of the Gods

ENTER THE HALLS OF VAHALLA...









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consider the social, political, philosophical and religious implications of a computer game is that we consider computer entertainment to be a form of art and art, *if you will, shapes opinions. Any serious criticism must take this into consideration or it abdicates a portion of the critic's responsibility. An editorial, on the other hand, should not address the real-life underpinnings of a particular game. It should advocate change in entire genres and industries.*

As for the political stance taken by the writer of the Sid Meier's Civilization *preview, there is no editorial philosophy change. Alan Emrich does not believe in the greenhouse effect. Johnny Wilson, who wrote the article on* SimEarth, *does believe in the effect. Both Emrich and Wilson believe that evolution is the most sensible scientific theory, but the comment to which you refer was* not *anti-evolution. It was another potshot at the greenhouse effect. The suffrage issue in the game and the pollution issue are both* very *relevant to game play, so we'll discuss those a little later.*

Most importantly, we want to clarify our editorial philosophy with regard to criticism. The opinions in a given article are not necessarily those of the editorial staff. Our only concern is whether the game is presented fairly. If the writer says something that is not verifiable according to our experience, we may challenge it. If, however, a writer honestly believes that a game presents something that he or she considers socially, politically or philosophically questionable, it is not our job to change his/her opinion, even if it does not perfectly correspond to our own. That is why we may have one reviewer write one opinion of a game in a review and another express a different opinion in a paiktography. Computer Gaming World *offers an independent forum for reflection on both the serious and frivolous considerations of computer games. We have no monolithic editorial board to synthesize controversial opinion into a bland, but uniform, consensus.*

As for the pollution issue, the game (and, of course, by Mr. Adams' own statement, he only knows what we've told him and Alan may not have made this clear in his preview) already has a significant penalty in victory points that is assessed against the player if pollution is not controlled. That should be enough incentive to solve the pollution problem, even without the greenhouse effect. As for women's suffrage, the semantic problem for Mr. Emrich was listing the historical achievement as a "Wonder of the World." He believes that a wonder should be something that is built, not achieved. We, of course, have had some debate over why he did not feel the same way about Darwin's voyage and Magellan's expedition. Maybe we can *call him a male chauvinist? Maybe he does want a retrograde society where women are once again treated as property rather than persons? Maybe he is trying to seduce* CGW *into being the propaganda tool that forges a new era of male domination throughout the world? Naaaah! He just oversimplified his critique of what he perceived as an oversimplification.* **CGW**

Conversions Received

Cyberblast (Innerprise Software) Amiga
Heart of China (Dynamix) Amiga
Home Alone (Capstone) Amiga
Speedball 2: Brutal Deluxe (Konami) Amiga
Team Suzuki (Konami) Amiga
The Lord of the Rings: Vol. 1 (Interplay) Amiga
Trump Castle II (Capstone) Amiga
Wayne Gretzky Hockey 2 (Bethesda Softworks) Amiga
Back to the Future Part III (Konami) C-64
Gateway to the Savage Frontier (SSI) C-64
John Madden Football (EA) SEGA
Shadow of the Beast (Psygnosis) SEGA
Starflight (EA) SEGA
The Immortal (EA) SEGA
Back to the Future Part III (Konami) IBM
Killing Cloud (Konami) IBM
Predator 2 (Konami) IBM
Jones in the Fast Lane (Sierra) IBM CD-ROM
Stellar 7 (Dynamix) IBM CD-ROM
SimEarth (Maxis) IBM for Windows
Tracon for Windows (Wesson International) IBM for Windows
Microsoft Flight Simulator (Microsoft) Macintosh
Rise of the Dragon (Dynamix) Macintosh
Pirates! (Ultra Games) Nintendo
Where in Time is Carmen Sandiego? (Konami) Nintendo
John Madden Football (EA) Super Nintendo

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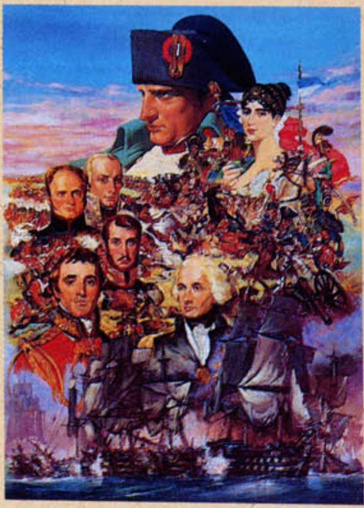
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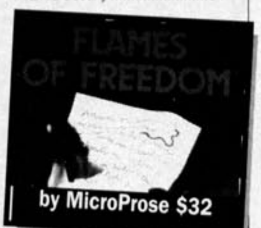
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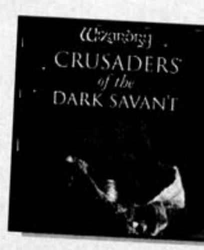
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ThrustMaster Weapons Control	89
Wico Analog	12

BUDGET

Advance to Boardwalk	14
Adventures of Beetlejuice	19
Astro Grover	10
Award Ware	14
Big Bird's Delivery	10
Big Boggle	14
Bug's Bunny's Adventure	14
Chip N. Dale's	19
Daffy Duck P.I.	19
DeskPower	14
Ernie's Big Splash	10

CLUE BOOKS

Quest for Clues 3	24
Quest for Clues 4	24
Ultima: The Avatar Adventures	16
Wing Commander 1&2	16
Martian Dreams	14
Savage Empire	12
Ultima 7	14
Ultima 6	12
Ultima 5	12

NEW RELEASES

Shanghai II:Dragons's Eye	32
Sargon 5	32
Infocom Compilation(20 games)	59
Leather Goddessess of Phobos	43



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Ernie's Magic Shapes	10
Expert Astronomer	14
Expert Calendar	14
Expert Checkwriter	14
Expert DOS Tutor	14
Expert Fax Forms	14
Expert Home Design	14
Expert Labels	14
Expert Landscape	14
Expert Lottery Expert	14
Expert Maps	14
Expert Resume Writer	14
Expert Utilities	14
ExpertPerfect Typing	14
ExpertPersonal Finance	14
Easy Working Writer	9
Easy Working Spreadsheet	9
Easy Working Filer	9
Easy Working Tri-Pack	19
Fax Power	10
Flintstones	19
Fun House	14
Grade A Algebra	13
Grade A Math 1,2,3	13

Mantis:Experimental Fighter	37
A.T.A.C.	32
Space Ace 2	37
Volpheed	27
Les Manley:Lost in L.A.	37



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Over the Net	32



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Grade A Vocabulary 2,3,4	13
Grade A Vocabulary 4,5,6	13
Grade A Vocabulary 6,7,8	13
Grade A SAT Vocabulary	13
Gremlins 2	19
Grover's Animal Adventure	10
NFL Print Pro	22
Student Word Processor	13
Grade A Early Learning	13
Jeopardy 25th	14
Jetsons	19
Jetsons/Flintstones Print Kit	14
Looney Tunes Print Kit	14
Muppets Adventure	14
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Orbits	37
Body Works	47
Bart Simpson/House Weirdness	32
Conquest of Longbow	37
Nova 9	25
Baseball Card Collector	32
Greens:Ultimate Golf Simulator	37



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Konami's Mission: Impossible

by Charles Ardai





TITLE:	Mission Impossible
SYSTEM:	IBM
PRICE:	$49.95
PROTECTION:	Document Look-up
DESIGNERS:	Dave Wrfield, Tarrnie Williams Jr., Stanley Chow and Peter Gardner
PUBLISHER:	Konami Buffalo Grove, IL

Mission: Impossible was not the best show on television, nor was it the worst. At its best it was ingenious and suspenseful, though implausible and politically naive. At its worst, it still filled an hour better than, say, *Starsky and Hutch*. More often than not, it fell somewhere in the middle. Despite its general mediocrity, however, *Mission: Impossible* was one of the best-known and most-loved shows of its day, and few would deny that it is remembered today as an important piece of our pop-culture heritage. There may not be annual IMF get-togethers the way there are *Star Trek* conventions and the Franklin Mint may not be knocking down anyone's door to solicit orders for an IMF chess set, but ask the average Joe what show "Your mission, should you decide to accept it" comes from and chances are he'll be able to tell you. Granted, the word "mission" is something of a giveaway there — but test the man on the street with "This message will self-destruct in five seconds" or a bit of Lalo Schifrin's famous theme music from the show and the results won't be much different.

The same generation that can name all the Brady kids and recite lines from *Get Smart* — the same people who saw the recent *Addams Family* movie primarily as a reference to a TV series rather than as a cinematic tribute to a series of *New Yorker* cartoons — feel toward *Mission: Impossible* the way an earlier generation felt toward Robert Stack's *The Untouchables* and a later generation feels toward *The A-Team*. These were *entertaining* television shows, not great ones. People remember them fondly.

It is clear, therefore, that **Konami** has not gone off the deep end in digging up this old series, currently seen only in off-network, off-hour re-runs, for a computer game revival. (It doesn't hurt that the series was briefly revived on television a few seasons back when a writers' strike made it impossible to get new scripts in Hollywood.)

There is bound to be more of an audience for a *Mission: Impossible* game than for, say, a *Welcome Back, Kotter* or a *Man From Atlantis* game, though Konami may still find a certain age group scratching its head in puzzlement at what is to them an unfamiliar title. The series format — a team of undercover agents using gadgets and deception to infiltrate and foil criminal enterprises — also has the advantage of lending itself naturally to game design.

With everything going for it from name recognition and nostalgia to ready-made game scenarios, *Mission: Impossible* is as close to a sure thing as any software company could ask for. All that Konami had to do in designing the game was stick close to their source material... which they did.

Unfortunately, Konami stuck so close to their model that along with the original's trademark gimmicks and devices, they seem to have duplicated the show's mediocrity. *Mission: Impossible*, the game, *is* very much like an episode of *Mission: Impossible*, the series — only not a very good one. More unfortunate still, even the worst episode of the television series was over in an hour and was followed a week later by a better episode (or at least a different one), and cost nothing to watch. *Mission: Impossible*, the game, goes on and on, tells only one story, and retails for a suggested $49.95.

Your Mission, Should You Choose...

The game opens with an exciting VGA/MCGA shot of Peter Graves lighting a sputtering fuse, which then burns along the bottom of the screen to the accompaniment of the digitized series theme music. This opening gets players in an appropriate mood, as does a passable VGA slide-show prologue in which Jim Phelps gets his self-destructing assignment (this time from a tiny computer screen rather than a tape recorder). One immediately misses the spoken-word audio that the scene deserves, as well as some real animation (rapidly switched still pictures are used instead). Nevertheless, the scene is effective.

However, the extra mile that the designers do *not* go in the prologue should make players suspicious about what they are going to get in the rest of the game. Sure enough, immediately after the opening, the program sinks into a sixteen-color, EGA-quality play mode, at which level it remains for the duration of the game. (Actually, the EGA graphics the

game offers *are* worse than those in the VGA/EGA-quality mode, but only marginally.) The feeling of having been duped by a false front — how appropriate for *Mission: Impossible* — is inescapable.

Before starting to play, one is asked to choose a team of four agents from a roster of twenty. That none of the original series characters are available, including Jim Phelps, will be most players' first disappointment. (Imagine a *Star Trek* game in which one has to select one's crew from a roster of nobodies.)

The characters who *are* available have digitized portraits which appear at the start of the game and which double as a truly annoying anti-piracy scheme. The scheme is annoying mainly because the software doesn't explain what it wants the player to do. A certain amount of trial and error, as well as flipping through the "Agent Procedure Manual," is necessary before one figures out how to get into the game. There is no reason a player should have to go through this. One sentence either on-screen or in the manual would have eliminated the problem.

Once one is allowed into the game, one gets to review the team's statistics. As a tip of the hat to the sort of role-playing game *Mission: Impossible* clearly wants to be, each agent has an extensive dossier of skills and abilities. Some of these come into play — lockpicking, for example — while others are just window dressing as far as this reviewer could tell.

After one's team is selected and activated, one begins the game itself. A scrolling overhead city plan gives a general view of the locations in which the story unfolds. The city contains some residential houses, estates, hotels, docks, eateries, a library, a park and a golf course. Though the playing field seems big at first glance, one quickly hits the edges and becomes familiar with all its contents. As soon as this happens, the game suddenly starts to feel small. Part of the fun of the television series was the feeling that the agents were traveling all over the world (though not necessarily in any single episode). The fact that the game is limited to one fairly ordinary suburban scene removes a good deal of the romance and adventure from the plot.

Actual gameplay takes place on side-view screens which are available for each location and which allow one to "zoom in" from the map screen, as long as at least one of the player's agents is present in a given location. Some locations have multiple levels and multiple rooms to explore; others do not.

In the center of town, a nondescript house conceals the headquarters of the IMF (Impossible Mission Force, for those not in the know). From this computerized nerve center, agents can equip themselves with weapons and espionage tools, set and monitor phone taps, recuperate from their exertions (in other words, take a nap), and prepare those famous *Mission: Impossible* disguises which make an agent look just like a captured criminal.

One's progress through the game is non-linear in a loose sense — one can go anywhere at any time, with or without a reason — but there is a fairly clear order of operations to follow based on the leads one gets from each encounter. A name dropped by one criminal suggests a new phone tap that might be worthwhile; tailing one suspect typically leads an agent to another.

The player's four agents can work independently and, in fact, the best element of the game is the need to have several operations underway at once. Everything happens in real time in *Mission: Impossible*, including travel from one location to another, and a single missed appointment or encounter can mean the failure of one's mission. (The game kindly offers a save/restore function for such emergencies, which the manual euphemistically refers to as "[times when] you've gotten off track with your investigation.")

You Call This Impossible?

The storyline one has to uncover, bit by bit, involves a shady plot by unidentified bad guys to kill leaders of industry and government and replace them with crooks. (A cynic might ask, "Who'd notice?") Several hits have already been carried out and in each case the killer has been released by a sympathetic judge. The IMF has to prevent further murders and get to the bottom of the plot.

If this sounds as memorable as yesterday's horoscope and as spicy as chipped beef, it is partly because the story is not one likely to inspire en-

thusiasm either in ordinary players or in game reviewers ... *especially* not in game reviewers, who see every game that comes out and, therefore, have to digest generic plots like this one by the dozen. To be fair, the presentation of the story in the game is slightly more enthusiastic than its in-a-nutshell presentation above. On the other hand, it's also longer and consequently duller.

Furthermore, the plot lacks the element of heightened suspense that made the best episodes of the television series work so well. There was a sense in those episodes that no one on Earth except Jim Phelps and his team had the necessary combination of wit, technology, intellect, and ingenuity to bring about a subtle and happy resolution to the problem of the week, which was always fraught with grave dangers. Hence, the title of the show, *Mission: Impossible* — like Captain Kirk in *Star Trek II*, who found a way to win the no-win *Kobayashi Maru* simulation — the IMF team is supposed to do the impossible. In the game, their job seems much too tame, the results they achieve too readily accessible to anyone with a good computer, a parabolic mike, an accurate wristwatch, and half a brain.

As one plays *Mission: Impossible*, one is constantly reminded of similar games such as **Microprose**'s *Covert Action*; yet *Covert Action* is a much better game, if only because it offers dozens of different stories for players to investigate. If one story is dull, the player can switch to another. That is not possible in *Mission: Impossible*.

The sad fact is that one gets to a point with this game at which one simply doesn't want to go any further. It will be a different point for different players, but it will come all the same. It's the point at which one knows the proper "moves" to make, but feels that there's no reason to make them.

As with a tedious movie or play, the temptation is to walk out in the middle. The temptation is doubly strong with a game like this, since one can quickly survey most of the locations, hear all the music there is to hear, whiz through a couple of encounters, and then sit back and ask, "Now what?"

Without a compelling story to hold the player's interest, there is no answer to that question. If this game really were the TV re-run it so often feels like, most viewers would just change the channel.

In Re: Mission

Despite all its weaknesses, though, *Mission: Impossible* is not the worst game on the market any more than *Mission: Impossible* was the worst TV series. The graphics are not what one might hope for (which would be something closer to **Dynamix's** *Heart of China* or, at least, a **Sierra** "Quest" game), but for their mid-range standard look they aren't bad. Despite some embarrassing flubs (houses are red on the map screen but yellow and green in close-up) and weird animations (when an agent turns, it looks like Leslie Nielsen breakdancing in *The Naked Gun*), most of the scenes are crisp and attractive. The sound effects are good, as is the music, and when either or both get irritating, they can be disabled.

The controls are a combination of point-and-click and menu-driven and, for the most part, work well. The system for moving agents from place to place and estimating distances on the map screen is somewhat over-complex (click on this, then that, then the other, in a set order), but one gets used to it. The system of alternating, in close-up sequences, between using the mouse/joystick/keyboard to control an agent's movements and using them to control an on-screen crosshair (which can itself control the agent's movements) is as cumbersome here as it was in **Access'** *Countdown*, the last game that used it; but one can just set the controls to the crosshair and ignore the rest.

If there is one good thing to be said on behalf of *Mission: Impossible*, it is that it does succeed in evoking the look and feel of the TV series — in some respects superficially, perhaps, but it *does* it. Fans of the series will have their share of cavils, but the game should be a treat for them nevertheless.

For the wider audience, however, this game cannot be recommended. A player looking for a good thriller or espionage game would do better to get *Countdown* or *Covert Action* instead. A player looking for a good *Mission: Impossible* adventure is directed, with regret, to the late-night listings of the current *TV Guide*. **CGW**



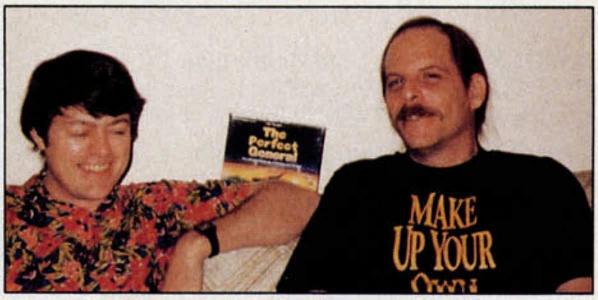
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COMPUTER WARGAMING WORLD

Computer Wargaming World is published twelve times a year as a free supplement in *Computer Gaming World*.

II Samuel 22:35

Mark Baldwin and Bob Rakosky Talk About *The Perfect General*



Left, Mark Baldwin; right, Bob Rakosky.

CGW: Congratulations on *The Perfect General*. It shot up to #4 in our *CGW* Top 100 Poll and is our new top wargame. How did you first get started on this project?

MB: [The publisher,] **QQP**, while still in its embryonic stages, called me with some product ideas. They were fishing for someone to turn their ideas into computer games.

CGW: So, basically, they had already done the design work for *The Perfect General* and you guys did the programming?

MB: Not exactly. What they had was a set of miniatures rules that they'd been playing for a number of years. This was the "core" game from which *The Perfect General* was derived, but this was *not* the game you know as *The Perfect General*.

CGW: Did you two invent specific scenarios for this "computerized" version of the game?

MB: Bruce [Williams, President of QQP] did the base design for about half the scenarios.

BR: The rest Mark did.

CGW: How was the decision made to make *The Perfect General* a modem game? What was involved in that aspect?

BR: It was evident from the beginning that *The Perfect General* was a great two-player game. However, playing two players on a single system has certain limitations because both players need game information at the same time. This, basically, eliminates any "hidden unit" features in the game. Allowing for the connection of two computer system provided the solution to this problem. Additionally, it makes it easier to find an opponent. They're just a phone call away, rather than needing to come over to one player's house.

CGW: There's a new scenario disk for *The Perfect General* coming out soon. What can you tell us about that?

MB: I liked the two "semi-historical" scenarios (Patton Kicks Butt and Alamein) I did for the game. Combining that with the desire for a "theme" for the scenario disk, I opted to do World War II battles. The tricky part was deciding which battles would make good scenarios.

CGW: Which battles did you finally decide on?

MB: I really enjoyed making the Anzio scenario. (It has a huge map and presents a real complex situation.) Pegasus Bridge was another favorite of mine because of my memories of the movie *The Longest Day*. This disk allowed me to do two of the three major "bridge" battles in Europe, the second being the Arnhem scenario (we didn't have all the information we wanted to do the third, a Remagan bridge scenario). I like the Oahu scenario because it was "hypothetical" situation that I've never seen in a wargame before, where the Japanese invade Hawaii in December, 1941.

CGW: In our beta version of the *The Perfect General: Battles of WWII* scenario disk, I noticed that it automatically upgrades the main executable program. What's new in the new version and how do people get it?

BR: The new version is primarily minor bug fixes, mostly in the modem operations of the game. When this version of the game is released, it will be available on CompuServe, GEnie and BIX.

CGW: What does the future hold for **White Wolf Productions**? Is there life after *The Perfect General*?

BR: White Wolf Productions has acquired the rights to the game *Empire*. Suffice it to say, this game now has a future....

CGW: Please, don't leave our readers hanging like that. C'mon, guys, spill the frijoles.

MB: Well, we're planning on doing some special things with the game. The first thing we'll do is to make "good old" *Empire*, revised, revamped and brought into the '90s with graphics, sound support, etc. The "core" game will be the same (and known as the "standard" game). There will also be a "basic" game and an "advanced" game included in the package.

CGW: What might the differences be?

MB: The basic game will be a simplified version of *Empire* using fewer unit types to help introduce players to the system. The advanced game will go in the reverse direction, adding additional unit types to enrich the game environment. There will also be new terrain types like rivers, forest, mountains and so forth.

CGW: New unit types, eh? Like what?

MB: Possibly bombers and armored units.

CGW: Any paratroops?

MB: Probably not, although you never know. The game will support six players, too, computer or human, with variable map sizes from small to very large. The new editor is going to allow for mapmaking, unit and city placement as well, so players can create whole custom scenarios.

CGW: When can we look forward to the release?

MB: Well, coding has already started, but it's still a ways away. We're committed to this project. These are all *plans*, remember. Plans have a way of changing, so let me add that *caveat*.

CGW: Thank you, Mark and Bob. We're sure our readers appreciate your answers and insights. **CGW**


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With Apologies to Casca

Strategies and Tactics for The Perfect General

by Roger "Roger-Tzu" White

The orderly who conducted me into the office had a familiar look, but I couldn't decide where I'd seen him before. Greece, Rome, France? ...Then it hit me — I'd seen him all those places; he was the Universal Soldier. Inside, I sat down in front of a grizzled-looking Universal Officer: General Mayhem.

"Troop," he growled, "this *Perfect General* is the latest and greatest transformation of miniatures-based wargaming into a computer game. The computer takes care of all movement accounting, damage assessment and combat results. All humans have to do is decide where initially to deploy units, where to move them and who they should target.

"This makes it easy for human players to seek enlightenment at the altar of the twin gods of wargaming: Strategy and Tactics." He motioned to his side and I noticed his twin altars sitting in the corner. "Today, troop, I'm talking tactics only: fire and movement and unit characteristics. When you get these down Patton, I mean pat, the battle's half won. Pay attention now...." Cigar in mouth, he proceeded to the chalkboard.



Fire and Movement

- Firing: think of muskets
- The best time to shoot
- Assaulting Cities
- Be sensitive to order of movement
- Finding the killing fields



Fire and Movement

The general pointed at the first line of the chart and read it aloud with the delight a Shakespearean performer would have in reading a soliloquy from *Hamlet*, "**Firing: Think of Muskets!**" He paused to let it sink in and I waited for the next artillery barrage of explanation.

"These weapons are WWII vintage, but



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if you think of men marching with muskets in the Revolutionary War, you'll have a better idea of how to handle firing. Units are given the opportunity to fire many times during a turn, but they can only exercise that option once per turn, and the closer a unit is to the target, the more probable a hit is. This means the winner in any engagement is the unit that shoots *last*, and when I say last, I mean *closest* — think about that, son."

He smashed his cigar ash against the second line on the chalkboard, **"The best time to shoot**," and continued his diatribe on combat doctrine. "There are three times during a turn that a non-artillery unit can shoot: the first direct fire phase, the passing fire phase and the second direct fire phase. The *ideal* shot is a 'passing fire' shot as the target unit moves into an adjacent square. Passing fire is particularly deadly because it's the only time the targeted unit doesn't have an opportunity to return fire before it takes a hit.

"Now, listen up," he commanded, "the next tip could save your butt. Passing fire at close range — call it *ambush fire*, if you like — is easy to arrange if you know how to do it. Just place your units in the woods or a city and wait for the enemy to approach. Your units will remain hidden from the enemy until they are adjacent, so he can't shoot at you until he pokes his nose into your muzzle.That means," he smiled with a grin that would do the Grim Reaper proud, "in case you're a slow learner, that passing fire is bad news for the attacker. The only good news, if you're on the attack, is that the defending unit can only do this once a turn. So, once a unit has fired at one target, other attacking units can close with impunity.

"...Bringing us to the next-most-desirable time to shoot," he paused and punctuated this portion of the lecture by blowing smoke in my face, "the **second firing phase of the turn**. After the movement phase, all the units are snuggled up as close as they're going to get, so fire will be the most devastating for both sides. It is also 'Use it or lose it' time. If you don't fire in the second fire phase, you won't get to fire during the entire turn. You gotta question, son?"

He must have read my mind. I hesitated for only a moment and responded, "But what about the first fire phase?"

The general chuckled, a somewhat artificial and unpleasant sound. "Think of it as 'special circumstance' fire. Use it whenever you can't wait for passing fire or end-of-turn fire. Take the case of the unit you've snuggled up next to in the woods. If you wait, it will move out of fire range by moving deeper into the woods, so you need to shoot it during the first phase. Or, maybe you want to clean out some city squares before the movement phase so you can occupy the city. That requires shooting during the first phase."

The reference to **"Assaulting Cities"** was his next objective on the chalkboard. I remembered an elementary school teacher who used to make the same mistake with a piece of chalk in her hand as the general did while holding his cigar. One has to be careful which finger one points with.

"Taking and holding cities is the name of the game in *The Perfect General*," he began the next phase of the lecture. "You win or lose based on how many cities you hold, not how many friendly units you save or how many enemies you kill. So, knowing how to take them quickly and without leaving heaps of smoking friendlies on the outskirts is important."

He looked down at me and pointed the wet end of his stogie at me as he continued. "If you're in a hurry and you've got a lot of friendly armor on hand, you can take cities with overrun assaults. Run yer armor units over the top of the enemy unit(s) one after another until all the defenders die. It's quick, but it can be expensive. I've seen three armored cars go down to a single infantry defender, son, and it's not a pretty sight.

"A way to cut the carnage is to spend a turn bringing up and unloading ground units two spaces away from the city. One of the armored units then drives up to the city to 'bell the cat.' Then, you can use the final firing phase of that turn and the first firing phase of the next turn to clear the city, and the movement phase to occupy it.

"In fact, if you plan your assault a couple turns in advance, you can soften up the city with artillery before you arrive. If it's a small town and you get a direct hit, it will be empty when you arrive. Those are the 'by the book' ways of handling a city, son, but I wouldn't be much of a general if I couldn't offer you at least one tricky way in, too! I'll cover that under movement orders."

Before I could even interrupt with a thousand and one questions, he smacked his knuckles against the next line on the board, **"Be sensitive to your order of movement**."

"The order in which you close with your assaulting units is *important!*" He trumpeted the last word as though he felt he had to wake me up. "Move your fired units first and those that have the furthest to travel second. Finally, move those that haven't fired and are closest to the target. The goal, of course, is to have the defender use up his passing fire opportunities on units that aren't as critical to the final assault.

"Now here's the trick, son; it'll work against the computer — and some people. Move a unit within long range of the defenders, then reverse direction for a square. When that sand-for-brains computer sees the unit moving away, he'll open fire even though it's a low probability shot. After the smoke clears, reverse direction again and continue the advance. Your target is revealed and he may have shot in vain."

He paused and sighed as he looked at the final line on the chalkboard, **"Finding the killing fields."** He turned toward me and lowered his voice as if he were a grandfather passing along a dark family secret. "Remember, son, computers are *very* patient — even if some-

thing doesn't work the first time, they will try and try again. Most computer combat algorithms will do pretty much the same things every time you play them. Once you have determined where the computer player wants to go and how he will choose to get there, you can set up 'killing fields' and blast him back to whatever silicon hell he crawled out of. Your computer opponent in *The Perfect General* likes to head for nearby cities. You can freeze his advance by bombarding cities he already controls. Then, when he loses control, he'll turn back to undo the damage.

"Human opponents, on the other hand, are less patient and a lot more varied. Humans are sloppy about recognizing the full capabilities of their units, but they disguise this by excelling at using the subset of units they *have* mastered. So, set up killing fields for human opponents, too, but don't expect them to walk through one more than once."

He reached into a briefing folder and handed me a sheet of paper. It was a simple list of available units. "Now," he said, "that you know your enemy, it's time to learn your units."

Unit Characteristics

Artillery

- Light artillery
- Heavy artillery
- Mobile artillery

Tanks and Cars

- Armored Cars
- Tanks

Ground Pounders

- Infantry
- Bazooka
- Engineers

Unit Characteristics

"Let's talk about **artillery**," he said. "Artillery fire kills units and stops movement. Killing units is as straightforward as figuring out where they'll be next turn and that, as you well know, is about as straightforward as figuring out what your new girlfriend will let you get away with on your first date. Against the computer that's not too hard to do, but humans tend to be a lot less predictable. Denying movement is more predictable: it's simply laying a barrage on squares critical to movement, such as roads running over bridges or through woods and mountain passes.



"The trick in using artillery well," he emphasized by waving his cigar as though it was a symphonic conductor's baton, "is that you gotta *see* things, troop. The rules of this war say you can only target where you can see. So if you love your artillery like you should, be sure to occupy hilltops and scatter scouts liberally around the base of those hilltops. Conversely, if your opponent likes artillery, chase down his scouts and hill people and you'll be limiting his artillery options."

The wizened old general slouched against his desk and continued, "Take **light artillery**, fer instance. Light artillery is inexpensive and, at close range, it makes a good bridge buster and small city neutralizer. Light artillery's weakness, of course, is its limited range. If you don't plan well, you'll spend half the campaign breaking it down, hauling it and setting it up again. So, *plan* well, dipstick.

"Now, on the other hand, **heavy artillery** is called 'heavy' for a reason," he explained. "That's because it covers half the map when it's centrally positioned. If ya' got half a brain, you'll place your heavies in centrally located forests and *surround* them with infantry. Then, it's likely to be a long time before circumstances force them to move and they'll do a lot of damage in the meantime."

The general seemed to look off in the distance for a moment, then grimaced and asked a rhetorical question, "**Mobile artillery**? I *love* it and I *hate* it. It can not only move and shoot, but it shoots before any other fire in a turn. It can clear cities and freeze tight formations before they smell their morning coffee. It'd be the ultimate hot item if it weren't for the 'Yes, buts.' Yes, it shoots first, but it can miss by up to three squares. Yes it moves, but only at four per turn. On top of that, it can't lay down a barrage, either. It's technology that hasn't come of age. I'm constantly on the phone to Major Havoc, the development engineer, saying, 'Get that Mark II version finished ASAP.'"

He savored the cigar smoke in his mouth like a connoisseur swirling a fine wine about his palate. Then, he poured the vintage wisdom of combat experience into my ears. "Now, the wise commander is a mobile commander and it will take **tanks and cars** to keep his army mobile. That's because tanks and armored cars are the means for getting to critical ground as the firstest with the mostest. They have to be used and used often both to fight and to ferry artillery and foot units around the battlefield.

"Take **armored cars**," he lectured, "they're the taxpayer's dream, nimble and inexpensive. You can buy a lot of 'em and use them to haul the ground pounders into action. You can even use 'em for scouting.

"**Tanks**," he continued "are slower than armored cars, but carry longer-ranged and harder-hitting weapons. The bigger tanks have less speed, more armor, more range and more killing power. An armored car, for instance, may have trouble shooting at bazooka units in a forest line. Light tanks have no difficulty and heavies don't even have to be within bazooka range. But," he sighed, "the big babies cost more — which gives you fewer shots per buck. Remember: Stormin' Norman gets all the equipment he wants; you don't. You're going to have to make hard choices, troop.

"All of which leads us," the master strategist proclaimed, "to the **ground pounders**. Foot units can't move fast or hit hard compared to armor units, but they'll buy you a lot of shots per turn. The secret is placing them where trouble comes to them — they shouldn't have to chase after it. Flood strategic city and forest areas with ground units during the set-up phase. When the battle goes elsewhere, have them hitch rides on armor units.

"The most prevalent form of ground pounders is **infantry**. Infantry units," the general paused, "can't do anything *well*, but God, they're cheap! I love 'em; taxpayers love 'em and they really flesh out a victory parade. Consider this scenario: you've got a city to defend and 20 points to do it with. 20 points will get you either one heavy artillery, three light tanks, four armor cars, six bazooka units or 20 in-

fantry units. Which is going to take the longest for the attacker to reduce?"

I hesitantly answered as he knew I would, but he plunged on with the discussion without congratulating me for my correct answer. "Now, **bazooka infantry** cost three times as much as regular infantry, but they pack enough punch to damage any tank unit at close range. If you plan to survive, you better mix these babies in with regular infantry so you can keep the attacker's assaulting costs high.

"As for **engineers**," he glared at me as though I were as low as the cigar ash he'd just allowed to fall on the floor, "engineers are an expensive fancy-ass specialty unit. They can do a lot of different things such as build and break bridges and make or clear mine fields, but all these things take time. Like most fancy-dancy specialists, there is only a sparing need for them in most scenarios.

"Now, listen and listen good! I'm not gonna repeat these next points!" the general insisted, even though I couldn't recall a time in the briefing when he had been forced to repeat anything. "When you're the attacker, you get to shoot first. This means you can put your units right on the starting lines. Unless the defender puts more units in a particular area, you should win any first-turn firing exchange. The exception is when the defender can place his units out of sight, such as in a forest line. In that case, you need to be cautious. Put inexpensive units up front and let them smoke out hidden units before the rest advance.

"As the defender, you want your troops placed where the attacker can't take advantage of his fire-first advantage. This means putting your troops in forests and cities, behind hills, and deep enough in your territory that they're at long range if the attacker starts on his starting line."

He cleared his throat and raised his voice, "There is an exception to this, though: those times when you, as defender, know where the attacker is going to appear and you can get close, such as a single-beach invasion scenario. Then, you can wreak havoc by buying lots of bazooka troops, walling off the attacker's launch point and opening up on the first round with everything you've got. It's a pretty sight. I've seen the smoke clear after the first round with not a single attacker left. By the way, if you're the attacker in such a situation and you see the defender just lickin' his chops, start the invasion with waves of infantry. Bring in your mobile units *after* his bazookas are gone.

"Finally, now that you've got the authority to select your own troops, you may need to know which ones to requisition. When you're the defender, you can put your first-build troops directly into critical areas, and you get more shots per buck out of ground-pounding units than armor, so make your first buys the infantry-type troops you need to defend critical areas. After you've planned what you need for the critical areas, *then* add mobile troops. They'll be the reserve that can pull your posterior out of the fire when something unexpected happens. They can also launch spoiler attacks that will unhinge your enemy's carefully coordinated plans.

"When you're the attacker, you need to carry the battle to critical areas as quickly as possible. This means you'll be buying more armor than the defender, but not exclusively armor — ground troops still buy you more bang per buck than armor, and once loaded on an armor unit they can keep up with the action.

"In many scenarios, you'll be getting reinforcements after the game starts. When that's the case, overbuy on your slow-moving troops during the first buy and add mobility with your reinforcements. They can pick up the slower ground troops on their way to the front."

He looked at his watch and lamented that the time for the briefing was almost over. "Ah, well," he snorted, "a battle doesn't last forever, either; it can be as short as six turns and it's rarely more than sixteen. When you're attacking you can't be as leisurely as you'd like and when you're defending, you gain whenever you slow an advance. Time is measured in how many turns you hold victory point locations and in how many turns you can deny your opponent victory point locations. Whenever you move or shoot, keep time in mind. Always ask yourself: 'Is this action gaining me or costing me *time*?' Time means victory points. Therefore, time is all that matters.

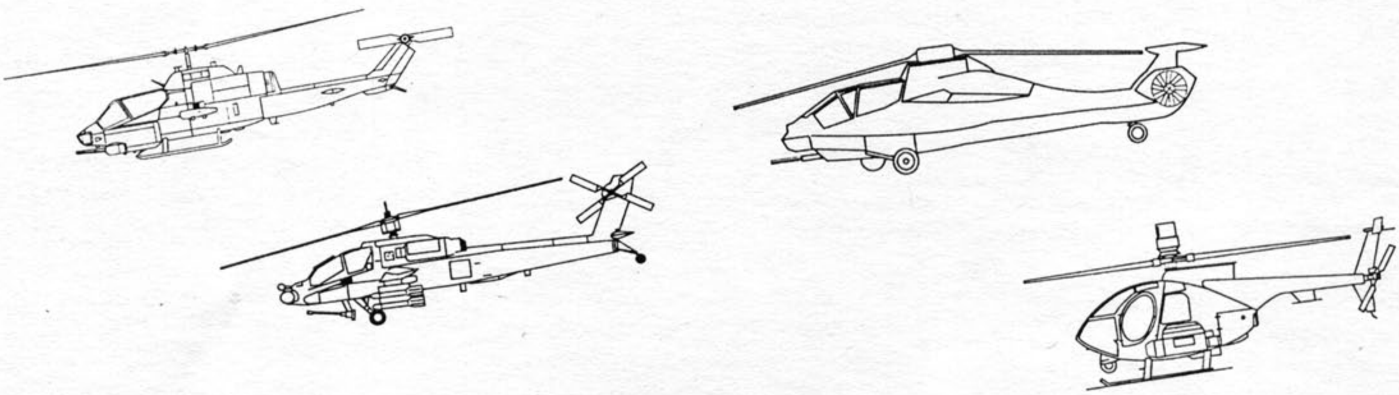
"That's it in a nutshell." General Mayhem put down the now-much-shorter cigar and returned to his desk. "There's a lot of depth in *Perfect General*. Be sensitive to unit characteristics and master the coordination of fire and movement. Do that, and the entire Universal Army here will be proud to follow you through every square on the board.

"We are at your service, sir." He saluted me. I returned the salute, thanked General Mayhem for his time and headed out for the field of honor. **CGW**

Gunship 2000 Guru

Tactics for the Microprose Flight Simulation

by Gary "Mo" Morgan



The key to flying successful *Gunship 2000* (*GS2000*) missions lies in watching the APR-39 warning receiver. This scope display shows players the lateral position and status of all entities (friendlies, neutrals, threats and targets) around the helicopter — even though it is somewhat unrealistic, because it provides more situational awareness than is usually available to actual combat aviators. Dots close to the center indicate a short range from the helicopter to the entities they represent. Players who successfully survive missions practice flying with one eye looking out the canopy and the other glued to the warning scope.

Warning Is "Spoken"

The warning receiver is also equipped with a missile warning system and laser warning system. The missile warning system shows inbound and outbound missile/rocket positions (shown in yellow), but activates a warning tone when missiles are inbound (indicated by a "cross") or radar/laser tracking is detected (radar tracking is indicated by a flashing purple/magenta symbol). The warning scope switches between different scales, indicated by the number of dots at the 12:00, 3:00, 6:00, and 9:00 o'clock positions. More dots indicates a longer-range presentation, while fewer dots shows a "zoomed in" view.

Effective countermeasures employment requires the player to know the type of threat (radar or infrared) engaging the helicopter, so that either chaff or flares can be dispensed and the proper type of jammer activated. Maneuvers and a descent are crucial to surviving a missile attack, and lucky players may find a nearby hill to hide behind. Since, however, the ground has nearly a 100% probability of kill when one is using the realistic landing (crashes possible) option, it is advisable to set the minimum altitude warning option to 50 feet ("C" key) and stop the descent when the warning tone activates by adding torque ("+" key).

Most players should initially entrust the employment of countermeasures to their computer copilot/gunner, and personally employ the weapons. The CP/G usually selects the proper countermeasure, but may not dispense chaff and flares at just the right time to regularly decoy missiles. Players who want to increase the odds in their favor will hit the right expendable decoy key ("M" for chaff or "/" for flares) for the threat type engaging the helicopter.

Veteran *Gunship* pilots will note that the IR and radar jammer displays are changed somewhat from the original program (they used to show an "activated" light and make a tone when selected). When selected in *GS2000*, the jammers display only a quick flicker of the appropriate light, leaving the player to wonder whether the jammer will automatically activate when needed or will require another selection by the player at the right time. Thus far, with the CP/G operating the jammers, they don't appear to be very effective. Perhaps, they are more effective when the player operates them. This "pilot" is unsure.

Antiaircraft artillery (AAA) may be detected at distances exceeding its effective range, thus allowing reactive shots (especially Sidearm!) by the helicopter before being engaged. Sidearm will work against any type of gun (self-propelled [SP] or towed) system. Towed guns are troublesome since they are soft targets (like infantry) and require short-ranged rockets or cannon to destroy. ATGMs like Hellfire (especially millimeter-wave [MMW]), TOW-2, and Helstreak work great against ZSU-23-4, ZSU-57-2, and 2S6 SP guns, and their longer range permits some standoff. Keep moving the helicopter (called a "jink"), since the warning receiver won't show the inbound bullets (only missiles). Bullets travel in a straight line and can't maneuver to follow movement. Listen for the machine gun noise which tells when the AAA is firing and *jink*! The CP/G usually won't announce when a gun is firing at the helicopter.

I Gotta New Altitude

Flying at altitudes greater than 200 feet above ground level exposes the helicopter to detection by threats at distances beyond the effective range of many onboard weapons. A good rule of thumb is that targets can be acquired (and see the helicopter) at a range of 1/10 km per 10 feet of altitude above ground. When flying at 30 ft, expect to acquire targets at 0.3 km, and at 100 ft expect to acquire targets at about 1 km. As in the

original *Gunship*, the best way to defend against a threat is to kill it, assuming enough weapons are carried! Flying below 50 feet minimizes detection of the helicopter by threat systems, but also significantly reduces the player's target acquisition capability and usually precludes successful launch of missiles (since they fall to the ground underneath the helicopter when fired at altitudes below 50 feet). Players flying at extremely low altitude, particularly when defending against missile engagement, need to keep one finger on the collective (+) key, even in easy flight mode. If the helicopter receives a hit to one of the engines, additional torque is instantly required to counteract that lost by the stricken engine. Failure to add torque to compensate for the lost engine can result in loss of altitude and a fatal crash.

Workin' on the Chain Gun

GS2000 adds many more weapons than were available in the original program. This writer finds that the tried-and-true standard load of eight Hellfire anti-armor laser homing missiles and twin canisters (seven in small canisters or fourteen in large ones) of rockets complements the Apache's 30mm chain gun and should be the standard choice for most missions. Hellfires effectively take out any armored vehicle at ranges out to six kilometers and require the player to maintain the target somewhere on the canopy for designation. TOW-2 wire-guided missiles perform in a manner similar to Hellfires, but are limited in range to four kilometers. A new Helstreak laser-homing triple-dart high-velocity missile can only be used on the advanced helicopters (Comanche and Longbow Apache). It has a shorter time-of-flight than Hellfires or TOWs and is best against lightly armored vehicles (armored personnel carriers or air defense vehicles). The requirement to orient the helicopter toward the threat during the time-of-flight of the Hellfire/TOW-2/Helstreak minimizes tactical flexibility and exposes the launching platform to engagement by air defenses. One good technique to limit this vulnerability is to pull back on the stick to minimize forward velocity whenever firing a missile. If one continues inbound toward one threat during an attack, the momentum may expose the helicopter to subsequent engagement by other nearby threats.

"Launch and Leave" ordnance does not require any designation from the helicopter after firing, thus allowing the player to descend and maneuver in order to minimize exposure. Hydra rockets require a precise launch angle and are only effective at ranges inside three kilometers. They are, however, ballistic and allow the helicopter to maneuver freely after launch. There are three varieties, each for a specific application: M247 for armored vehicles, M261 for general purpose, and M255 flechettes for unarmored vehicles and personnel. For a player accustomed to firing anti-armor munitions, an "infantry" target is particularly threatening and requires engagement by either rockets or cannon (usually while dodging a shoulder-fired SAM).

I Only Have Hinds in View

When a player attains the rank of Captain and can fly a Longbow Apache, the MMW Hellfire B is available as a weapon option. The MMW Hellfire B can be fired immediately after target acquisition (out





to 8 km) and requires no post-launch designation. The Sidearm radar-homing missile is fired at radar air defense threats, and is really handy for SA-11 SAMs and towed guns. Firing MMW Hellfires and Sidearms significantly improves survival, since the player can maneuver immediately and fly away from the threat while the missile guides its way to the target.

Most missions pit the helicopter(s) against at least one air threat, either an enemy helicopter (Hind, Hip, Havoc, Hokum or Gazelle) or a fixed-wing aircraft (MiG-29 Fulcrum, MiG-23 Flogger or Su-25 Frogfoot). For helicopters without guns (Kiowa, Defender, Blackhawk), either a 20mm cannon pod or a machine gun pod should be loaded, but these require accurate pointing. At least one helicopter in each section should carry some type of anti-helicopter ordnance. Sidewinders are deadly, can engage at long range, and are particularly handy against high-speed MiGs. Normally, two boxes of Stingers can handle one or two Hinds or Gazelles. Practice firing at least one Stinger and quickly switch to cannon when the helicopter gets inside a range of 1 km. Don't forget to maneuver, since enemy helicopters will also fire cannon or missiles. M255 flechette rockets are effective against air threats and Helstreaks are nearly as good as Stingers.

I Can See for Miles

Of seven types of helicopters, two are reserved for players who are promoted to higher rank (first lieutenant for the Comanche and captain for the Longbow Apache). Essentially, a new player can fly either the AH-64A Apache or AH-1W SuperCobra Gunship, the OH-58D Kiowa or AH-6G Defender Scout, or the UH-60K/L Blackhawk Utility helicopter. The Kiowa, Defender, and Longbow Apache feature a mast-mounted sight above the rotor, which allow "peeking" over terrain without exposure of the entire helicopter, but do *not* show acquired targets (players must try to guess if the dots in the distance are rocks or tanks). The Kiowa, Defender, and Blackhawk do not have guns, so alert pilots will make certain that they carry some type of gun pod.

When the player is promoted to high enough rank, the Comanche and Longbow Apache should be tried out. Two Comanche variants are available, the Gunship and Scout. The only difference between the two is that the AH-66 gunship has two wings which can mount weapons. A typical gunship wing weapons load would be four Helstreaks on each side. A recessed weapons bay is available on either variant, with three small missile stations on each side. The only weapons that can be mounted internally are Hellfires and Stingers. Try four Hellfires and two Stingers unless the air threat is forecast to be heavy, then reverse the mixture. Unfortunately, Stingers, Sidewinders, and Sidearms can't be mounted on the Comanche wingtips — a mandatory future modification! For this reason, Apaches are usually preferable to Comanches for heavy threat scenarios, since the Apache can carry such a large stock of weapons. The single advantage the Longbow Apache offers is the option to use the MMW Hellfire and Helstreak. With a load of eight MMW Hellfires and eight Helstreaks, the player can load Sidearms, Sidewinders, or Stingers on the wingtips. MMW Hellfires can do the same job as Sidearms except against towed guns. Helstreaks can do



the same job as Sidewinders or Stingers, but the Sidewinder has the long range and lethality.

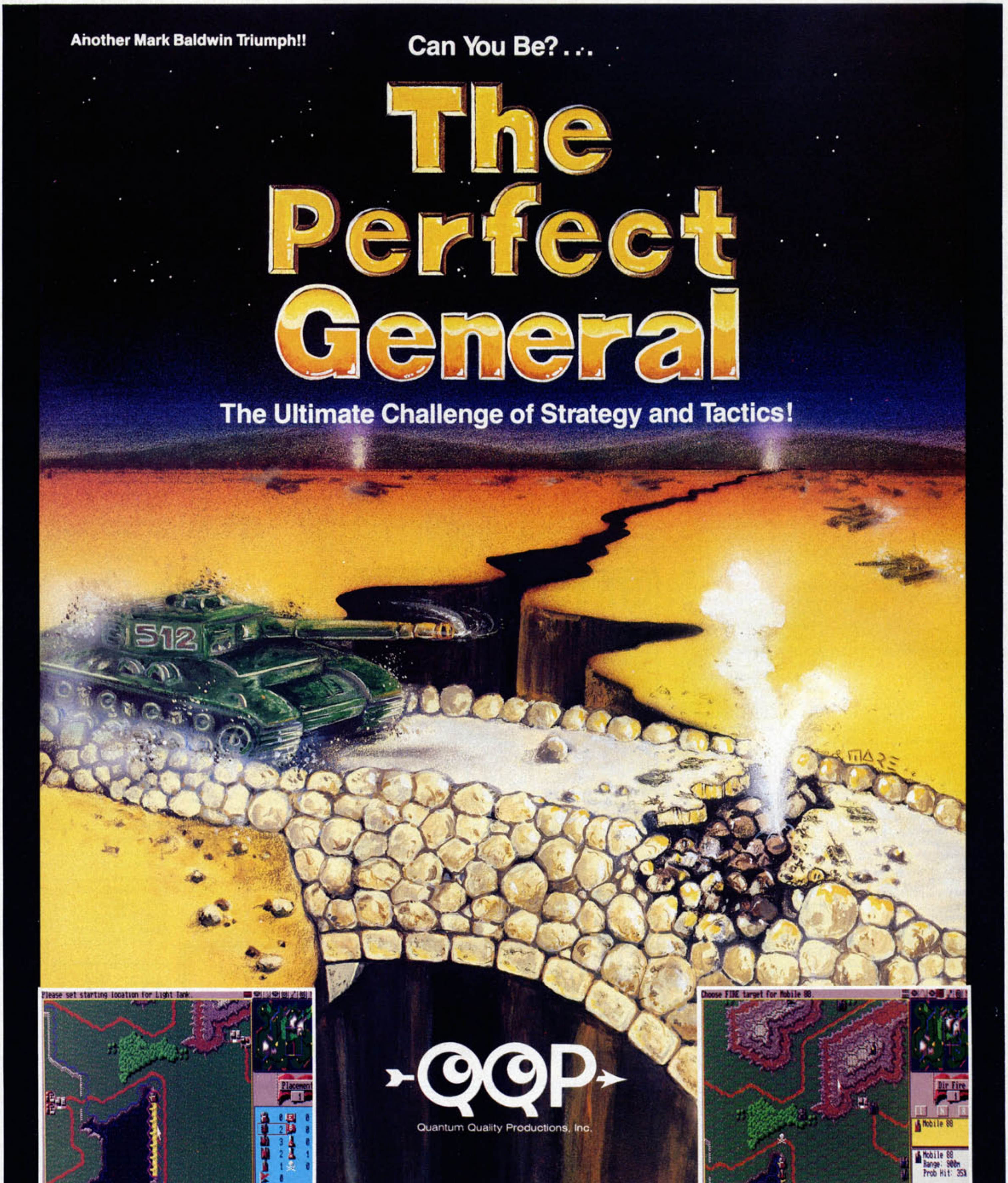
The Longbow Apache looks identical to a normal Apache, except that the player can hit the F2 key and look through the mast-mounted sight. The Comanche has a beautiful modernistic cockpit with two full-color Multi-Function Displays (MFDs), while all other helicopters have a single monochrome MFD. Players will normally toggle through the MFD options on any helicopter to find out the distance to the next nav point, status of primary and secondary mission target, look at the moving map display, check stores status (including a digital fuel quantity), or select a targeting display. The Comanche's warning receiver can be selected on either MFD so the player can configure the cockpit displays as desired. Key points to remember when flying a Comanche are to retract and extend the landing gear (not required on other helicopters), and to open the weapons bay when using bay-mounted missiles (similar to *F-19 Stealth Fighter*) and close it after attacks to minimize radar signature. The Comanche is highly maneuverable and is fun to fly. Like the SuperCobra, it only has a 20mm gun which can be a limitation against tanks and bunker targets.

Plight Made Higher

When possible, players should continue to increase the realism levels of the game as they become more comfortable with the controls and tactics. Initially, let the CP/G run only the countermeasures. As soon as possible, try to fly missions against Average troops, since missions against Poor troops net very few points or medals. Select realistic visibility and wind options early. Try to use the realistic landings option, although crashes will be fatal and trying to land with a damaged rotor may kill you. The author still uses easy flight and avoidance system options and, to date, has received Army Commendation Medals, Air Medals, and one Bronze Star. Use of realistic flight and crack/elite enemy quality should produce higher scores and advanced decorations such as the Silver Star, Distinguished Service Cross, and Congressional Medal of Honor. When the Persian Gulf becomes pretty routine, transfer to Central Europe for more challenge with more modern technology threats such as SA-11, 2S6, and new threat helicopters.

After becoming familiar with single missions, attempt a campaign. These are linked scenarios using the same map. Results from one mission are reflected in subsequent missions. If the player did well on the previous mission, the enemy is pulling back. If the player didn't complete either mission assignment, the enemy is attacking. Use the best quality helicopters and weapons on early missions in a campaign. Threats are dense and capable. On later missions, particularly when the enemy is on the run, threats will be more sparse and less capable. On later missions, try using less capable helicopters and weapons to increase scores. Each campaign mission will indicate helicopters and weapons which are not available, but there is usually at least one type available which will have maximum efficiency in a given mission.

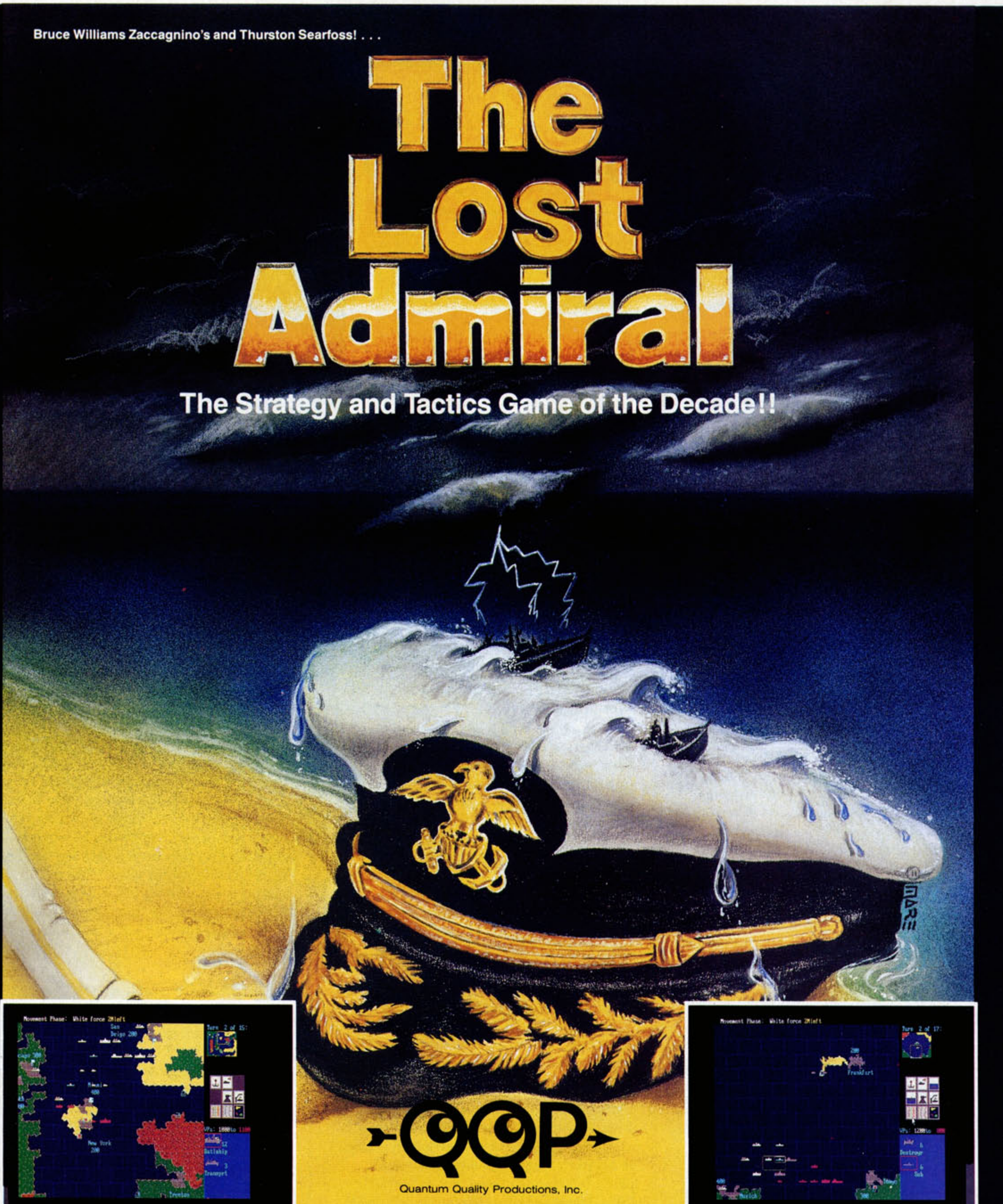
Gunship 2000 is a simulation that allows the player to grow in both piloting skill and tactical intuition. It is to be hoped that the tips offered in this article will enhance every reader's enjoyment of this exciting product. **CGW**



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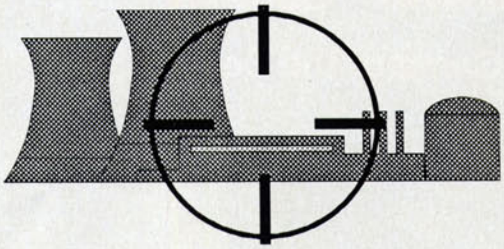
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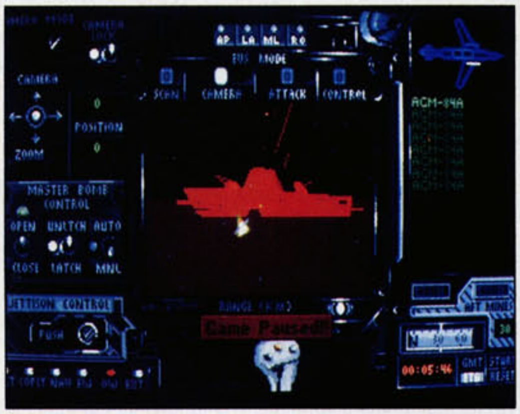
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A "Potk" by Any Other Name

A Preview of Three-Sixty's Operation Sledgehammer for Megafortress

By Mike "Moondawg" Weksler





In *Megafortress*, the player and fictional crew developed a mastery of their respective duty stations by flying training missions such as those one would expect at Nellis AFB. Then, these skills were tested to the limit in combat missions when the *Megafortress* was deployed over Iraq in the Desert Storm scenario missions. Additionally, the "Flight of the Old Dog" mission (based on the Dale Brown book which inspired *Megafortress*), was developed in order to add a certain degree of role-playing to the game (see *CGW* #90 for tips). Now, in an upcoming scenario disk, **Three-Sixty Pacific** plans to go one step further and, as a result, take the player into the near future with *Operation Sledgehammer*. Based on a plot that expands hypothetically on current events in the Middle East, *Operation Sledgehammer* posits a situation in which an Iranian military officer (with, strangely enough, the surname of a progressive Egyptian leader from the past) attempts to overthrow a moderate government in Iran by using conventional, chemical and even nuclear attacks.

Calling an "Old Dog"

In the scenario, it is impossible for the Ultimate Bad Guy to get military supplies from Iran, but he is being supplied by sympathetic countries such as Libya and Cuba. Supply ships, escorted by naval convoys and combat air patrols (CAPs) are conveying those from Libya (via the Persian Gulf) and from Cuba (via the Caspian Sea). In dire straits, the Iranian government asks the player to fly the Megafortress on covert missions to intercept these shipments.

Holiday in Libya

The player's first goal, flying out of a base in Malta, is to interdict the supplies coming out of Libya. This allows the players to try their hand at anti-shipping missions *en masse*. Since, of course, supply ships are bound to be protected by the Libyan navy, however, this is no easy task. One can expect to encounter: Soviet *Koni* class frigates, Vosper Thornycroft Mark 7 frigates, Soviet *Nanuchka II* class missile corvettes, and the Combattante II G FAC (fast attack craft). All of these ships offer reasonably lethal threats to the EB-52, each with its own plethora of AAA and SAM ordnance, but the *Koni* class frigate and the *Nanuchka* class missile corvette pose a particularly serious threat because they are capable of firing the SA-10/SA-N-6 Grumble. The latter has a fifty-mile range and moves a two-hundred-pound warhead at the speed of Mach 6!

In addition to missions designed to destroy shipping, one may have the navigator plot courses over land in order to hit such targets as airfields, naval yards (some with ships still in harbor), CICs, oil refineries, terrorist camps, SAM sites and other choice locations.

In land-based missions (or those in close proximity to land), players are likely to encounter air defense forces comprised of the following aircraft: Mirage F1-Cs, MiG-25 Foxbats and MiG-23 Floggers. The MiG-25s are fairly resilient and their Libyan pilots have the near-suicidal audacity to come in and make "guns-only" passes after they exhaust their supplies of air-to-air missiles. The Mirages, however, will prove to be the most deadly aerial assailants, due to their superior maneuverability and advanced weaponry.

Enemy aircraft are vectored to the Megafortress via EW-GCI (Early Warning-Ground Control Intercept) radar sites, so it is imperative that one's pilot fly low (below 500 feet) in order to maintain a stealthy ingress. SAM sites, of course, abound, and the most lethal are the SA-10/SA-N-6 Grumble sites. These weapons are able to track and engage multiple targets, so they should have little problem dispatching one's unwary EB-52 pilot.

Target Iran

Eventually, the supplies will be cut off and the Libyan terrorist machine will be crushed. At this point, the Megafortress will find itself based in Kuwait, poised and ready to attack targets deep within Iran. Naturally, the most important objective in the Iranian missions is to knock out Iran's nuclear capacity.

In addition to the threats encountered when attacking Libya, the Iranian military is capable of firing the Hawk short-range SAM and the awesome SA-12A Gladiator. Although this SAM is slower than the Grumble (Mach 3), it carries a high-explosive warhead, weighing in at a hefty 300 pounds!

When flying missions into Iran from Kuwait, one's BUFF must fly through a

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Here are just a few of the things you'll learn: get the answers to puzzling economic forces in the game; learn to defeat each of the tycoons; manupulate the stock market to your advantage; and learn optimal building and survey techniques.

The SimCity PLANNING COMMISSION HANDBOOK

by Johnny L. Wilson Osborne McGraw-Hill $14.95

Each time we read this book we learned something, because it explains the theory behind the game and doesn't just list one-two-three hints. - START Magazine

Reading the draft for The Sim City Planning Commission Handbook has been quite educational and entertaining for me, but also strangely familiar, as I go through the discovery process once again. - Will Wright, designer of SimCity

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formidable gauntlet of SAM sites, EW-GCI radar, and CAPs of various aircraft in order to reach the respective targets. Distances are extremely long and refueling after takeoff is a *must* — especially when attacking targets in the mountainous regions or near the Caspian Sea.

With the Megafortress for a "Hammer," Everything Looks Like a Nail

To deal more effectively with new threats deployed *against* the player in the new scenarios, the Megafortress is now ASM-119A Penguin- and CBU-95 fuel-air explosive-capable. The Penguin is a low-cost alternative to the AGM-84A Harpoon and is most effective against the outmoded Iranian and Libyan naval vessels. It is a passive IR homing missile which flies to an initial point using on-board inertial guidance, then seeks out the thermal image of a ship against the cooler ocean surface. With only a twenty-mile range, it is riskier to deploy than the Harpoon. Understandably, the inclusion of the Penguin adds considerable excitement into the game, since *anyone* can fire and forget with a Harpoon, but it takes skill and daring to use Penguins.

The CBU-95 fuel-air explosive (FAE) weapon is a laser-guided 500-lb. bomb that detonates above ground and releases gasses which are, in turn, subsequently ignited by a second, delayed detonation. The resulting explosion is extremely powerful and capable of destroying hardened targets, including concrete hangers and bunkers.

"On Top of Ol' Smokey"

The objectives of the Iranian missions are very interesting and this author does not wish to give *too* much away — however, the second mission in the Iranian section is literally a knock-out. The primary objective of this mission is to destroy the Tabas Nuclear Weapons and Research Facility and its adjacent service airport.

The primary target is located several hundred miles behind enemy lines and fuel management is critical. The designers recommend flying at 50% power for the duration. While this is tolerable for attacks on sea-based targets, one should remember that there is a major mountainous region to fly through. Additionally, the area is literally webbed with EW-GCI sites so one must keep the plane's altitude below 500 feet. When encountering a mountain range, of course, the cautious pilot will insist on having at least 100% power to clear the peaks without stalling. At low altitude, this is likely to burn fuel at an astonishing rate and may leave one's fuel needle resting on empty by the conclusion of the objectives for this mission.



Fortunately, the tanker which tops off the player's EB-52 at the beginning of each mission will remain on station until the end of the mission. So, the wise navigator will plot a course to the "second to the last" waypoint in a mission in order to accommodate a rendezvous with the KC-135.

In addition to fuel management, weapons deployment is also critical for victory. The player may wish to have his OW destroy several targets of opportunity. While one will not want to expend too many weapons on such targets during the approach to the primary objective, this can be a very profitable activity upon egress from the successful destruction of a primary objective. For example, after the Tabas research facility is destroyed, the player's navigator should plot a course for the secondary target — the Kerman uranium mine. This target is awesome. Set in the mountains at an altitude of 6000 feet, it is guarded by two heavy-duty SAM sites, which will not provide one's Electronic Warfare officer the pleasure of jamming them.

The SAM sites are best taken out in stand-off encounters, leaving the mine relatively open for a clean shot. Since, by this time, the Megafortress will more likely than not have a few engines burnt out and be low on fuel, it is imperative that speed be kept down to a minimum. This brings the mission down to a crawl and makes it harder to maneuver when flying back through the gauntlet to Kuwait. At this point in the mission, anything left on the racks should be saved to mow a path through the deadly lawn of SAMs and EW-GCI sites which the Megafortress must traverse.

Bugs Exterminated

Operation Sledgehammer includes a new *MEGA.EXE* file which has been upgraded to solve fatal errors in the program, such as the QEMM compatibility error and certain mouse driver compatibility errors. Additionally, the divide error which was encountered when the player had an Offensive Weapons officer drop free-fall ordnance will no longer occur.

Mission Accomplished

As welcome as these new missions are, there is little change from *Megafortress* in actual gameplay. The overall engine remains the same, while the missions expand the playability of the original game. Therefore, any shortcomings which still remain in the gaming interface, such as the escape key taking one back to the main menu rather than backing up by one screen; the inability to save separate weapons configurations and the lack of a horizontal situation instrument when flying from the EW and OW stations, will hopefully be remedied in *Megafortress II* (see below for more info).

Whatever it is that keeps players strapping into their EB-52's, fighting evil wherever it rears its ugly head, *Operation Sledgehammer* delivers a bomb bay full of it. **CGW**

What Do You Do When You're Done?

The next *Megafortress* scenario disk will be based upon Dale Brown's book, *Skymasters*. For those who have not read the novel, it is set in the near future where, with the U.S. out of the Philippines, China grasps the moment and decides to move in. The *Megafortress* (quickly becoming the military's version of Superman as it flies all over the globe as a CAPped adventurer) goes deep into China. Will the player, the player's crew and the *Megafortress* survive death-defying, harrowing missions over thick steamy jungles, to pull out the weeds of evil by the roots? One will have to fly a pattern until first quarter of 1992. Also in the works are plans for a mission and theater construction toolkit. Also expected to begin design in 1992, *Megafortress II* promises to be more detailed in the aircraft on-board systems and in the outside world. At this time, a multi-player feature is being considered.

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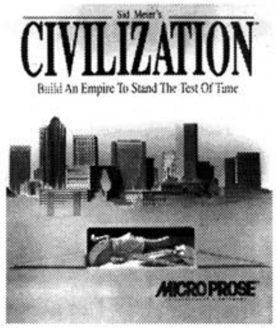
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Heart of China	37	37
Indiana Jones...Atlantis	38	-
Jaws of Cerberus	43	-
Lost in L.A.	38	-
Police Quest 3	39	-
Savage Empire	39	-
Spell Casting 201	39	-
Leisure Suit Larry 5	38	-
Lemmings 2	22	22
Willy Beamish	38	38

FUTURE

	IBM	AMI
Buck Rogers	33	33
Buck Rogers 2	34	-
Breach 2	21	34
Hard Nova	34	34
Martian Memorandum	38	-
Megatraveller 2	39	-
Planets Edge	39	-
Rise of Dragon VGA	39	39
Rules of Engagement	39	-
Space Quest 4	39	39
StarFlight 1	19	34
StarFlight 2	19	34
Star Trek 25th Anniversary	36	-
Twilight 2000	32	-
Wing Commander	45	-
Wing Co. Secr. Miss.	21	-
Wing Co. Miss. #2	21	-
Wing Commander 2	47	-
W/C Spec Ops 1 or 2	27	-
Speechpak	15	-



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HARDWARE

	IBM	AMI
Ad Lib	85	
Ad Lib (Micro Ch)	145	_
Soundblaster (Pro)	190	
Soundblaster (Micro Ch)	225	-
Gravis (Joystick)	39	34
CH-Flightstick	49	
Champ Joystick	20	-
Thunderboard	99	-
Thrustmaster	80	

STRATEGY

PRE WW II

	IBM	AMI
Bandit Kings China (KOEI)	39	39
Battles of Napoleon (SSI)	34	-
Civil War Vol. 1 (SSG)	25	-
Civil War Vol. 2 (SSG)	25	-
Civil War Vol. 3 (SSG)	25	-
Dec/Gettysburg (TIGL)	32	-
Genghis Khan (KOEI)	39	39
Gettysburg (SSI)	39	-
Gold of Americas (SSG)	25	25
Grand Fleet (SIMCAN)	39	-
L'Empereur	38	-
Medieval Lords (SSI)	39	-
No Greater Glory (SSI)	43	-
Nobunaga's Amb. 2 (KOEI)	39	-
Prelude to Jutland (GQ)	29	-
Red Baron VGA (DYNAMIX)	37	37
Romance 3 Kingdoms 2	43	-
Warlords/Enhanced (SSG)	32	32

WORLD WAR II

	IBM	AMI
Action Stations V. 3.2	32	32
Action N. Atlantic (GQ)	29	-
Air Raid Pearl Harbor (GQ)	29	-
Ger. Raider Atlantis (GQ)	29	-
Banzai (GQ)	29	-
B. Tank Barbarosa (S.C.)	39	-
Bismarck (GQ)	29	-
Fleet Med (SIM CAN)	39	39
Halls Montezuma (SSG)	25	34
In Harms Way (SIM CAN)	39	39
Kreigsmarine (SIM CAN)	39	39
Long Lance (SIM CAN)	39	39
Malta Storm (SIM CAN)	39	39
Mariana's Turkey Shoot	29	-
Midway (GQ)	29	-
MBT Kursk (SIM CAN)	39	39
P-38 (LUCAS)	20	-
P-80 (LUCAS)	20	-
Pacific Storm (SIM CAN)	39	39
Panzer Battles (SSG)	25	-
Patton Strikes Back (BROD)	38	-
River Plate (GQ)	29	-
Rommel N. Africa (SSG)	28	-
Second Front (SSI)	39	39
Secret Weapons Luft.	44	-
Silent Service 2 (MICROPR)	36	36
Storm Across Europe (SSI)	39	-
Their Finest Hour/Battlehawks	44	19
Typhoon of Steel (SSI)	39	39
Western Front	39	-

SCI-FI

	IBM	AMI
Imperium (E.A.)	28	28
Overlord (VRGN)	33	33
Reach for the Stars (SSG)	28	28
Robosport	38	-
Rules of Engagement	39	39
Second Conflict (Windows)	34	-
Ultra Bots	?	

HINT BOOKS

	IBM	AMI
Harpoon Battle Book	19	-
SIM Earth	19	-
Railroad Tycoon	15	-
Chuck Yeager Handbook	15	-
Wing Commander Hintbook	15	-

MODERN

	IBM	AMI
Chuck Yeager Air Combat	39	-
A.T.P. (SUB LOGIC)	39	-
A-10E Tank Killer (DYNA)	39	39
Brigade Commander (TTR)	-	31
Conflict Middle East (SSI)	39	39
F-117A Nighthawk (VGA)	43	-
F-15 II	34	34
F-15 II Desert Storm Disk	21	-
Flight/Intruder (S.HOLOBYT)	39	39
Flight Sim 4.0 (S.HOLOBYTE)	39	39
5th Eskrada (SIM CAN)	39	39
Gunship 2000 (MICROPR)	**40**	-
Gunboat (ACCOLADE)	-	34
Harpoon v.1.2 (360)	39	39
Harpoon #2 N. Atlantic (360)	21	21
Harpoon #3 Med.(360)	21	21
Harpoon #4	24	-
Harpoon Scen. Edit. (360)	28	28
Harpoon Challenger Pack	55	55
Jet Fighter #2 (VELOCITY)	42	-
M-1 Tank Platoon (MICROPR)	39	39
MBT Centr. Germany (S C)	39	39
MBT North Germany (S C)	39	39
Megafortress (360)	39	-
Megafortress Miss #2	24	-
Red Storm Risin. (MICROPR)	34	15
7th Fleet (SIM CAN)	39	39
Tank/M1A1 (SPEC HOLO)	36	-
Team Yankee (EUROPEAN)	39	39

GENERAL

	IBM	AMI
Civilization	38	-
Command HQ (MICROPL)	34	-
Lost Admiral	38	-
Perfect General	38	38
PowerMonger (E.A.)	34	34
RailRoad Tycoon	34	34
SimAnt	38	38
Sim City (MAXIS)	34	34
Sim City Ter. Edit.	15	-
Sim City Set #1 Ancient	23	23
Sim City Set #2 Future	23	23
Sim Earth	45	-

SPORTS

	IBM	AMI
4-D Boxing	34	-
ABC Wide World of Boxing	34	-
Andretti's Racing Challenge	34	-
Chessmaster 3000	34	-
Dealer's Choice Poker	35	-
Hockey League Simulator	28	28
Indy 500	18	34
Jack Nicklaus Unltd.	39	39
Jimmy Connors Tennis	34	-
Links	39	-
Links Disks (1, 2 or 3)	19	-
NFL Pro League	47	-
PGA Tour Golf	34	34
The Games/Winter Challenge	36	-
Tony LaRussa	34	-
Video Poker I	34	-
Wayne Gretsky	-	34
Wayne Gretsky 2	36	-
Weaver Baseball 2.0	34	-
MLBPA Stats '90	15	-
Commissioner's Disk	22	-
World Champ. Cribbage	24	-

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Circle Reader Service #83

Isn't That Just Spiffy?

State of the Industry: Anyone who has ever been browsing in a retail store will have experienced that *deja vu* moment of having a salesperson walk up and ask the inevitable question, "May I help you?" Many times one has to respond with that slightly embarrassed aside that almost makes one feel like an intruder, vagrant or freeloader: "No, we're just looking!" Of course, there are times when one is *delighted* to have the help, times when one does not have the faintest idea of even where to start looking for a given product or what to ask for. That is when the retail salesperson becomes the most important resource available to a consumer.

Normally, this is a good idea. Sometimes, however, it can be a very bad idea. It is a bad idea for the salesperson to be the most important resource when that salesperson provides biased information to the consumer. Now, we don't mean that it is bad for a salesperson to have an honest opinion on a product, even when (heaven forfend!) that opinion disagrees with the *CGW* review. We do think it is bad when the salesperson is biased because he or she receives a cash "spiff." A spiff is a cash bonus which comes to a salesperson on a per unit basis (i.e. Ms. Dos receives a cash payment of $5.00 for every copy of *Ishtar: The Adventure Game* that she sells). Now, of course, it is no problem if the computer game happens to be a *good* one, but it can sure be a problem if, as in our ridiculous example, that salesperson recommends an adventure game based on a box office disaster rather than a "Hall of Fame" quality game. In one recommendation, the salesperson may have turned off a potential new computer game customer by valuing that fast $5.00 over a quality recommendation.

CGW has only recently become aware that some software publishers are resorting to cash spiffs in order to move their merchandise faster. We mention the issue in order to present a "caveat emptor" (Buyer Beware) warning to our readers. We would also like to note that there are some less obvious versions of the spiff which are being practiced in the current market. One such spiffy approach is the "Mystery Shopper" program in which the representative of, say, **Intrinsic Software** wants to reward salespersons who are pushing their *An Oriental Tale: Fido Goes Tantric* role-playing game. They put an advertisement or notice in the employee newsletter of, say, the "Electronic Cuisine" software chain stating that the "Mystery Shopper" will be traveling throughout the chain during the month of February. The mystery shopper enters a store; asks the salesperson for a good computer role-playing game; the salesperson recommends *An Oriental Tale* and the mystery shopper pays $50.00 or so as a reward for the salesperson's diligence.

Another approach is less insidious and does not directly affect the salesperson. A company called **Best Dead Software** has a backlog of units from a failed title, *Noblesse Oblige* (which originally retailed at $49.95). They have a new title called *Gump Worsley's Real Men's Ice Hockey* and believe that it can do fairly weli. So, they approach "Software Boudoir" and tell them that they will provide the chain with a free *Noblesse Oblige* (which they can sell at $9.95) with every copy of *Gump Worsley's Real Men's Ice Hockey*. If the hockey game sells, the store makes a quick $10.00 on the inferior product.

Again, *CGW* brings these three "marketing" strategies to our reader's attention so that they can be forewarned. Hopefully, the next time a salesperson tells one of our readers that *Zen Archery* is the best action game on the market, our reader will ask him or her if they are getting a spiff to say that or if they really believe it.

State of the Magazine: Sometimes, journalists become so jaded that they take their role as gadfly too seriously. In entomology, a gadfly is any of a number of flies that bite and annoy livestock. In journalism, they are those annoying, opinionated writers/speakers that goad individuals, institutions and industries into action. Sometimes, in our attempt to do the latter, we simply accomplish the former. Scorpia's recent opinion column on *Megatraveller 2* and her caustic remarks about *Space: 1889* in the CRPG survey seem to have bitten unfairly. Because of some caustic remarks made in private by *CGW*'s editor on an earlier occasion, the latest remarks were perceived as "yellow" journalism rather than factual reviewing. Scorpia's remarks about the "atrocious" combat system in the original *Megatraveller* did not adequately convey the significant work which **Paragon** has done to improve the combat system (not only in *Megatraveller 2*, but also in the upgrade to the original CRPG). Further, the comments on *Space: 1889*, while being Scorpia's actual opinion, did not take into consideration *CGW*'s earlier review which had been positive and was *also* the reviewer's honest opinion.

While it is up to our readers to determine whether we are *too* critical or not critical enough in our analyses of computer games, we regret the implication that we would *ever* prejudge a company's products or attempt to sabotage a company's potential for success in the marketplace. It *is* our goal to be critical. In doing so, we will occasionally make publishers, designers, marketers and retailers angry. We do *not*, however, deliberately set out to dismantle *any* product.

Speaking of potential misunderstandings, we recently became aware of a misrepresentation of *Sid Meier's Civilization* that stems back to our early Consumer Electronics Show coverage. A mail order advertiser lists the game as a multi-player game because our CES report described it as such. It is, of course, a multi-player-style game where the human player competes against six computer players. We had originally hoped that the game would support multiple human players, as well, so we seem to have heard what we wanted to hear rather than what **Microprose** was telling us. We apologize for any disappointment we may have created in what turns out to be a magnificent product.

Finally, an open word from the editor to the industry as a whole. Any criticism or humor directed at company representatives during a private interview or demonstration remains between us. As a person who cares about computer games and the future of computer game design, I will never hesitate to give you honest appraisals of games, stories and features which you can take or leave. As a gadfly, I will contned with you about design decisions upon which we have disagreed in the past especially on those occasions when the "market" agrees with my position) and I may conveniently forget the typos and errata in our publication, but such discussion is *never* intended to be malicious. Frankly, I believe in computer entertainment and I am proud of what you do. Speaking of pride, *CGW* is proud to announce the induction of *King's Quest V* into its *CGW* Hall of Fame. The technological innovation and commitment to excellence in its product is indicative of the impact that the entire *Quest* product line has had on the entertainment software industry. **CGW**

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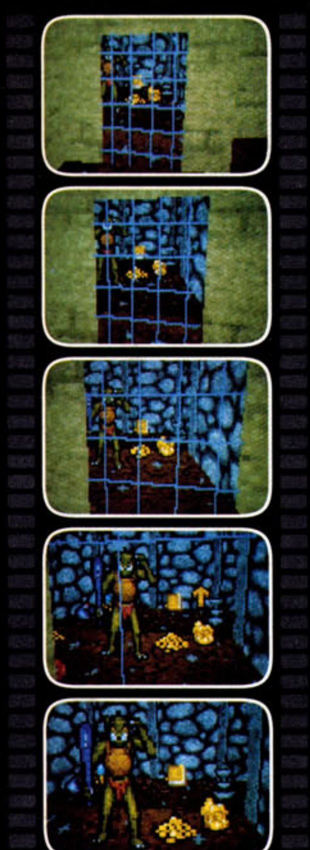
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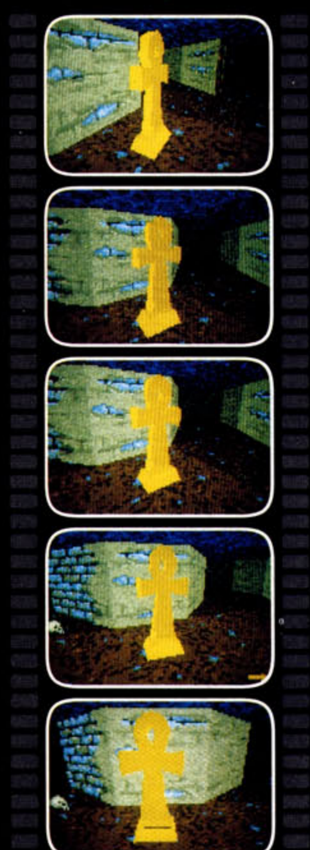
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